Daily Report

Central Eurasia

FBIS-SOV-96-087
Friday
3 May 1996

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FBIS-SOV-96-087 *3 May 1996*

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Russia: FBIS Presidential Election Report 2 May

WA0205210696

[FBIS Report] ***This is the third in a weekly series of reports FBIS will produce on Russian regional developments in the campaign for the 16 June presidential election. It is based solely on Russian media reporting from Moscow and provincial sources (see note 1).***

(Note 1) FBIS receipt of some Russian local media sources via mail accounts for the dated nature of certain items cited. This FBIS media note presents the local media in the timeliest manner possible, given procurement constraints.

Secret Yeltsin-Zhirinovskiy Pact Alleged Nalchik's SEVERNYY KAVKAZ weekly (April, No. 16) cited "confidential sources" as saying that during Yeltsin's 15 April visit to Krasnodar, presidential representatives carried out "unofficial" talks with a top official from Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) to discuss a "secret union" between Yeltsin and Zhirinovskiy. The report asserted that the Yeltsin aides and LDPR Duma Deputy Vladimir Kostyutkin, who was head of personal security for Zhirinovskiy before becoming a Duma deputy in 1993, discussed "not only the exclusion of criticism of one another during the election campaign" but also LDPR support for Yeltsin in a possible second round runoff with CPRF leader Gennadiy Zyuganov. It also contended that the party's "organizational offices" have already circulated instructions for LDPR activists to exert "maximum efforts" to persuade Zhirinovskiy's supporters to vote for Yeltsin in the second round in the event Zhirinovskiy does not make the cut.

Yeltsin's Campaign Itinerary for May Firming Up Citing "sources in Moscow," ITAR-TASS (25 April) reported that Yeltsin is "expected" to visit Yaroslavl on 3 May, Volgograd on 9 May, Kostroma on 25 May, and Krasnoyarsk sometime during "the last 10 days of May." In addition, Doku Zavgayev, the head of the Moscow-backed Chechen Government, told INTERFAX (30 April) that he had met with Yeltsin that day and the president had "confirmed" his "intention" to visit Groznyy. Zavgayev told ITAR-TASS (1 May) that Yeltsin may visit the republic in early June. Yeltsin, while not confirming a specific date, told INTERFAX (1 May) "despite my tight schedule of trips and work, I will be there."

Presidential Administration "Ensures Contacts" With Regions Through New Press Agency Presidential Administration Head Nikolay Yegorov announced the formation of the Regional Press Agency [Agenstvo Regionalnoy Pressy] during a meeting with 270 staffers representing regional radio and TV studios from 75 state TV and radio companies. Yegorov claimed that the new agency will "ensure contacts" with regional mass media and give detailed information on the upcoming presidential election (INTERFAX, 22 April) . Contending that regional mass media coverage of federal events is "poor," Yegorov claimed that the new agency will help local journalists get interviews with top state officials, participate in presidential trips, and meet with leaders of political movements. Yegorov rejected reported accusations from presidential candidate Mikhail Gorbachev and the CPRF that the creation of the agency is linked to the election. He retorted that the agency is "in no way being created only for the election campaign," claiming that the agency is "necessary so we can all understand each other better through a reciprocal exchange of information" (ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI, 23 April). The new agency will reportedly be based at the presidential administration's press center.

CPRF's Dismal Showing in Local Legislative Elections Called Omen for Zyuganov The national proreform press is characterizing the CPRF's showing in local elections, particularly the 14 April election of Sverdlovsk Oblast's Legislative Assembly, as a bad omen for Zyuganov's presidential election chances. The CPRF won 16 percent of the vote for the Sverdlovsk parliament, far fewer than the 36 percent garnered by Governor Eduard Rossel's "Transformation of the Urals" bloc. According to NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA (17 April), the CPRF failed to win any of the three seats in the Omsk legislature by-elections, won ten fewer seats than they had in the previous election to the Altay Kray legislature, and did not win a single seat in elections to three municipal assemblies in Moscow Oblast. The paper called the results a "political barometer of the preelection attitude on a nationwide scale" and contrasted the victory of candidates or parties backed by Yeltsin supporters, such as Rossel and Moscow Oblast Governor Anatoliy Tyazhlov, with Zyuganov's inability to "help the local CPRF and its partners" with his visit to Altay on the eve of the election. Similarly, KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA said that Sverdlovsk is a "kind of barometer of the political climate in the whole country."

Novosibirsk Provides Evidence for Varying Views of Yeltsin Chances in Regions The local press in Novosibirsk has expressed contrasting views of the standing of Yeltsin's support in the region, and some independent national newspapers have argued that the continuing lack of unity among Novosibirsk "democrats" increases the likelihood that Yeltsin and Yavlinskiy will split the vote, thus improving Zyuganov's chances.

An editorial in SOVETSKAYA SIBIR (24 April) contended that Yeltsin has "succeeded in seriously chang-

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ing the balance of forces in regional politics" and has dramatically improved his election chances, even in regions long considered to be sympathetic to the Communists. According to the editorial, even governors that have been considered "red" or "pink" are "in no hurry to demonstrate their loyalty" to Zyuganov. The paper mentions two factors that have contributed to this supposed turnaround—the CPRF's "harsh regional policy" and Yeltsin's active courting of regional leaders and voters. According to the daily:

- The "provinces" have come to the "totally well-grounded" conclusion that Zyuganov's "silence" on how he will fund his "grandiose social program" suggests that he will attempt to force more money out of regional budgets and that he therefore poses a "latent threat" to local self-government achieved during the Yeltsin years.
- Negotiations between Yeltsin and Federation Council Chairman Yegor Stroyev, Yeltsin's successful campaign visit to Belgorod, and the "new turn" in "mutual relations" between Yeltsin and Krasnodar and Stavropol all demonstrate that Yeltsin has "similar basic interests" with even those regions that voted for the communists in the December Duma election.

Evincing a more pessimistic outlook regarding the election, VECHERNIY NOVOSIBIRSK (12 April) published an interview with Ivan Indinok, former governor of Novosibirsk Oblast who has been affiliated with Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin's "Our Home Is Russia" (NDR) bloc. Indinok, who was appointed Novosibirsk governor by Yeltsin following CPRF member Vitaliy Mukha's dismissal but then lost the post to Mukha in a recent election, contended that his loss was attributable to "a strong reddening" that "came from the East" after the 17 December State Duma elections. When asked about the presidential election, Indinok predicted that "the Communists will win" and that they will "turn back the clock."

The independent national KOMMERSANT-DAILY (24 April) reported the "failure" of Novosibirsk "democrats" to agree on a single presidential candidate during their first conference dedicated to this issue. Anatoliy Manokhin, former presidential representative for Novosibirsk, organized the conference and attempted to steer the participants toward two main goals for the election: to unite against the communists, and to vote for Yeltsin or Yavlinskiy, whom he claimed were the only two "realistic" candidates. Manokhin said that he has a "personal dislike" for Yavlinskiy, but holds that Yavlinskiy can be "trusted" more than Yeltsin. However, Manokhin's endorsement of Yavlinskiy for the presidency drew "detailed criticisms" of Yavlinskiy's record. An informal poll taken among the conference participants revealed that 27 supported Yeltsin, 17 supported Yavlinskiy, and seven supported other candidates. The article noted that some participants recalled Indinok's "unfortunate experience" when the nomination of Russia's Democratic Choice member Ivan Starikov split the proreform vote, allowing Mukha to take the gubernatorial seat. The participants forecasted that "the same could happen" in Juae, reasoning that "supporting Yavlinskiy could aid" a Zyuganov victory.

Yavlinskiy Campaign Announces Lebed Irkutsk Visit VOSTOCHNO-SIBIRSKAYA PRAVDA (25 April) reported that presidential candidate Aleksandr Lebed is planning a campaign visit to Irkutsk on 16 May. The announcement of Lebed's visit, according to the daily, was issued by the "federal headquarters in support of Grigoriy Yavlinskiy." Yavlinskiy and Lebed are currently negotiating with Svyatoslav Fedorov on possibly backing a joint candidate in the elections (see note 2).

(Note 2) See FBIS Trends of 2 May 1996 (WA0205173896), "Yavlinskiy's Wild Card Role in Presidential Campaign."

Krasnodar Campaigns Detailed The weekly SEVERNYY KAVKAZ (April, No. 16) described the differences in the various presidential campaigns in Krasnodar. The left-wing forces in the province, after an initial period during which the "ultra left-wing" of the party did not want to back Zyuganov, "unanimously" agreed to support and work for his election campaign. Relying on a "classical scheme set up by Lenin," the CPRF is obligating "each of its 30,000 activists in the province" to make "personal contact" with voters. According to the article, this tactic "proved itself" in the 1994 Krasnodar local election and the 1995 Duma election.

Meanwhile, according to the paper, the democrats in the province have been badly split for the last two years, causing "a decline in their influence." Although some democrats from local chapters of Democratic Russia and Russia's Democatic Choice have agreed to help set up a local Yeltsin for President headquarters, municipal and provincial officials, not local activists from democratic parties, are playing a "decisive role" in Yeltsin's campaign in the province.

Zhirinovskiy appears to be having the most problems in the province. The article reports that 190 million rubles were embezzled from the local LDPR chapter's coffers and that Zhirinovskiy only has 200 activists in the entire province.

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Study Shows Little Room for Growth in Yeltsin's Popularity A report issued by the Vox Populi and 14 public opinion organizations in March indicates that Yeltsin faces an uphill battle in improving his popularity in many regions. The report, published in NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA (20 April), identified 17 distinct regions in the country and contended that only three of these regions support "democracy," while 11 support "communism," and four favor "national-patriotism." According to the study, Yeltsin's popularity has room to grow in the European North, St. Petersburg, Moscow, the Urals, and North- and Mid-Western Siberia. Conversely, his ratings have a high potential for going down in the Black Earth region and surrounding provinces of central Russia, the Southern Volga region, the South, the Northern Caucasus, Southwestern Siberia, and the Far East. Zyuganov has room for growth in the Northwest, the Black Earth region and surrounding provinces, Central and Southern Volga region, the South, the Northern Caucasus, Southwestern Siberia, and Southeastern Siberia, while his ratings could go down in the European North, St. Petersburg, Moscow, the Urals, Northwestern and Midwestern Siberia, and Northeastern and Mideastern Siberia.

Russia: Yeltsin Reiterates Election Candidacy in Yaroslavl

LD0305124396 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1000 GMT 3 May 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] After a short break, Russian President Boris Yeltsin has resumed his electoral trips around the country. In all, he is to make 16 such trips in May, including one to Chechnya. But today the president arrived in Yaroslavl. [video shows Yeltsin coming down aircraft steps; embraces a man waiting to meet him]

[begin recording] [Correspondent S. Zenin] The Russian president is a frequent visitor to Yaroslavl. His last visit to the town took place after the October events in 1993. At that time, Boris Yeltsin was invited to unveil a monument to Yaroslav the Wise. Today the president is here on an electoral mission. [Video shows Yeltsin facing camera, speaking to people in street]

[Yeltsin] I will not withdraw my candidacy. I will fight for the presidency — not fighting for power, but fighting for Russia — so as to drive Russia forward. [Applause].

[Zenin] Despite the festive day and the splendid weather, the people of Yaroslavl did not go off to the countryside today. The people were waiting for Boris Yeltsin beside the monument to Yaroslav the Wise. One newly married couple were in luck: they were personally congratulated by the president. And there were many, many questions. Boris Yeltsin shared his presidential problems with the people of Yaroslavl.

[Yeltsin] They take bribes in the government, in the administrative machinery and elsewhere. It is the same in the localities, of course. I have already dismissed several ministers. I have dismissed heads of administration for such misdemeanors, you see, so they have to be punished. [Video shows woman seen holding up a placard saying "Yeltsin is our president"]

[Zenin] Today the Russian president stressed once again that his main opponents in the upcoming elections will be the communists. It looks as though the closer the elections, the more confident and tougher Yeltsin's stance is becoming.

[Yeltsin] Fight the commies [kommunyagi], right? They cannot be allowed to come to power. No, that would be a disaster.

[Unidentified woman in crowd] Yes, just a bit more toughness and firmness in keeping law and order.

[Zenin] Before the day of the elections, the president has decided to get a lot done. He confirmed his wish to implement a plan for private housebuilding. While visiting a servicemen's memorial complex, Boris Yeltsin promised to keep a close watch on the social security program for veterans. The president was asked when people's savings would be indexed.

[Yeltsin] That decree will come out in May. But it will work in stages.

[Unidentified man] All that is clear.

[Yeltsin] Because it's a great deal of money.

[Man] We realize that.

[Yeltsin] So it will depend on people's ages; 80 years and above. Then 70-80 years. Then 60-70 years.

[Zenin] There was a visit to a military hospital for veterans that was not on the official schedule. The first half of the program of the Russian president's visit to Yaroslavl came to an end at this point. [end recording]

Russia: Lebed: Yeltsin Agreed Election Results Not Subject To Review

LD0205173996 Moscow NTV in Russian 1500 GMT 2 May 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Two presidential candidates had a confidential meeting in the Kremlin today. Boris Yeltsin received Aleksandr Lebed, who was the first

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on the list of presidential candidates to be granted such a meeting. Many observers, learning of this event, hastened to announce that the president had allegedly offered Lebed an important post, in exchange for dropping out of the presidential race. Lebed's headquarters immediately denied these suppositions, quoting the words of the candidate himself, to the effect that the president had offered him no posts of any kind. Alim Yusupov has the details of today's Kremlin meeting.

[Yusupov, over video of Kremlin grounds, Lebed, newsmen] The meeting between Boris Yeltsin and Aleksandr Lebed, according to the latter, lasted exactly 27 minutes. This is the first personal meeting and the first time an existing president has had a tete-a-tete chat with any of his rivals. According to Aleksandr Lebed, who spoke to journalists immediately after his Kremlin conversation ended, the initiative came from Boris Yeltsin himself. No sensational revelations ensued. Lebed was not offered any eminent posts or coalitions.

[begin Lebed recording, interviewed in Kremlin grounds] We registered the fact that I am running in the election. The president agreed with this and there is no question about it. [end recording]

[Yusupov] According to Aleksandr Lebed, Boris Yeltsin shares the concern about the situation that has emerged in the country in the run-up to the elections, and about the increasing confrontation between supporters of the various presidential hopefuls. The interlocutors did not discuss the well-known appeal by the bankers [the Appeal of the 13], nor did they discuss the other candidates.

In response to a question from NTV Television, Lebed summarized the results of his conversation as follows:

[begin recording] [Lebed] We agreed that the elections should take place on schedule, that there should be no falsifications, they must be honest and democratic elections. No presidential candidate must permit himself to inflame interethnic or interclass dissension. And all of the candidates should sign some sort of document stating that the results of the elections are not subject to review. Elections are in fact devised so that the issue should not be settled by a fight, aren't they? That is what elections are for.

[Unidentified correspondent] Did the president agree with this idea?

[Lebed] The president agreed with this idea.

[Correspondent] It is not yet clear how any such document will be drawn up and signed. However, if Boris Yeltsin decides to go ahead with such an idea, he will obviously have to meet his other rivals as well.

[Lebed] He did not discuss this topic with me, but I have information that over the next three or four days meetings with all the other candidates are planned. [end recording]

Russia: General Lebed To Unveil Election Program in May

LD0205145296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1241 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 2 (Interfax) — General Aleksandr Lebed, one of the candidates for the Russian presidency, will unveil his election program later this month, Lebed's press office told Interfax.

It quotes the general as saying that the programs of all candidates were the same — promises of economic recovery, ending the war in Chechnya and regular payment of wages.

"My own program is simple and easy to grasp. In the first place, order must be brought to the country and conditions set under which the laws will be observed and these will work to the benefit of the people," Lebed believes.

The press office also said that Lebed and two other presidential candidates, Grigoriy Yavlinskiy and Svyatoslav Fedorov, plan to meet on May 15 to strike a three party deal to form an election alliance, the Third Force.

Russia: Replacing Presidency With 'National Council' Endorsed

964F2014A Moscow LITERATURNAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 No 17, p 2

[Article by Marat Rogulchenko: "All Power to the National Council?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] No matter who wins the election, the main result of the election campaign is already known.

In essence, the State Duma elections have already demonstrated this to us. Even at that time, in December of last year, it became strikingly clear to us that the Russian people are suffering from polar disengagement and disorientation, that the self-consciousness of our society has been literally torn to pieces. The presidential election will only further extend this abyss between various segments of society.

Our leaders have so compromised themselves that the majority of people have come to relate skeptically overall to the authority as such. I myself am personally

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convinced that it will be impossible to save Russia without a strong state authority that enjoys popular confidence. Under the present discord, only an authority that unites the most diverse political forces, and in so doing does not engage in a tug-of-war but instead works seriously and selflessly for the sake of restoring the unity of our nation, effecting the spiritual and economic rebirth of Russia—can be a trustworthy authority.

President Yeltsin talks about consolidation, as do Zyuganov and Zhirinovskiy. We are already seeing a kind of consolidation of Yavlinskiy with Fedorov and Lebed. But such a consolidation, necessary for the victory of certain forces, will provide Russia little. I personally consider quite constructive the proposal of Constitutional Court member Valeriy Zorkin—to share presidential authority with an empowered State Council, consisting of presidential candidates who amassed more than 3 percent of the votes in the election. Indeed, the creation of such a State Council, a body that would to a significant degree objectively reflect the self-consciousness of Russian society, could constitute the first step towards a new authority. Even such a decision is indeterminate, however, and introduces instability into the future separation of powers. It can hardly be expected to pacify our agitated society.

As we know, attempts on the part of various movements to find a single candidate have ended in failure. It is impossible, in the antagonistic society we have become, to reach rational agreement on the proper path to our own well-being.

What then am I proposing? My proposal may seem naive, but in such an extreme situation naivete may have a certain role to play. Thus, I see a solution in constituting the presidential authority not in one single individual, but in a collective body. Perhaps we could call it the National Council. No, it is not necessary to cancel the presidential election. But it is entirely essential that at least one candidate for president (and preferably all of them) promise his electorate that in the event of victory, he will transfer the entirety of presidential authority over to the National Council. This council should include, as Zorkin proposes, all the "3-percenter" candidates and the Duma's "5-percenters"— Zhirinovskiy, Zyuganov, Yavlinskiy, and Chernomyrdin.

Here one may raise an objection: Really, which victorious candidate will disavow his win? Can you not see the ferocious struggle that will flare up among the contenders? But things are proceeding to the point where because of this squabbling, the current president may just cancel the election entirely. And he will be partially right, insofar as this is not so much a struggle for the right to extricate Russia from dishonor as it is for the right to grasp power. But Yeltsin would have another motive—he could cancel the election out of fear of losing power.

So under my proposal, Yeltsin would be obliged to be a member of this National Council—for succession of authority. And it would be a good thing if candidate Boris Nikolayevich initiated it all—if he were the first to swear a sacred oath to transfer power upon victory, for the good of Russia, to the National Council. What then would happen if the others did not follow his example? In that case we, the majority of voters, would simply not vote for these people. For here we would clearly see that they yearn for "the throne" out of personal ambition, and not in order to save Russia from civil war.

I believe that the hierarchy of Russia's leading religious faiths should be invited to the National Council, religious leaders who represent many millions of believers. I cannot imagine this council without A.I. Solzhenitsyn as a member, a person who spent his entire life in anxiety over the destiny of Russia. In this way the National Council would truly reflect the current state of self-consciousness of Russian society.

The National Council will itself (with subsequent confirmation in universal popular referendum) adopt the principles of rotation of its members, the principles of selecting the head of state (or collective leadership), and the principles of adopting and implementing resolutions.

Is this unrealistic? Let us recall that the actions of our most diametrically opposed political leaders (in deciding, for example, the issues of joining the Council of Europe or obtaining IMF credits) have shown that they can consolidate their efforts when top-priority national interests are at stake. Not being temporary, four-year rulers whose objective it is to secure their own well-being, members of the National Council will be able to develop and carry out a state policy that is in conformance with Russia's long-term interests, a policy of common sense.

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CIS: CIS Leaders To Meet in Moscow May 17

LD0205162496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1241 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MINSK, May 2 (Interfax-West) — CIS leaders are scheduled to meet in Moscow on May 17, Belarus Foreign Minister Vladimir Senko told a news conference in Minsk on Thursday.

He said the summit agenda will be made public in the next two or three days.

The minister also said the presidents of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia who signed a four-nation treaty on closer integration will meet in Moscow a day before.

On Minsk's compliance with obligations under the Conventional Forces in Europe [CFE] agreement, Senko said his country has already destroyed the specified number of tanks and aircraft.

He said Belarus is yet to hand over dozens of army vehicles to Hungary to comply with the CFE deal in full. Hungary in turn is committed to destroy a similar number of older generation vehicles, Senko said.

Under the CFE deal, Mink was committed to destroy 1,873 tanks, 1,441 APCs and 133 combat aircraft by November 17, 1995 but President Alyaksandr Lukashenka suspended the process last February because of economic difficulties.

However, the destruction of conventional weapons resumed at the end of 1995.

The minister gave assurances that his country will have honored its obligations by the start of an international CFE forum in Vienna later this month.

Baltics: Baltic Parliaments Break Silence on Dudayev's Death

LD0205193296 Moscow NTV in Russian 1500 GMT 2 May 96

[From the "Segodnya" news program by announcer Tatyana Mitkova]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Baltic countries did not pass over the Chechen theme in silence today.

[Correspondents Dmitriy Novikov and Juris Binders, Baltic bureau] The Latvian parliament today debated a proposal by a group of deputies to send Chechen representatives a telegram expressing condolences to the inhabitants of Ichkeria over the death of their president. After lengthy debate, the deputies postponed the issue of sending condolences until the next plenary session, because some deputies in the chamber asserted that a parliamentary decision like this would complicate relations between Riga and Moscow.

According to Latvian member of parliament Juris Vidins, his colleagues' action should not be regarded as interference in Russia's internal affairs. As he says, we have no right to remain indifferent to the mass human tragedies that are currently taking place in Chechnya.

Estonian parliamentary deputies have already signed a statement expressing condolences to Dzhokhar Dudayev's widow and the Chechen government. According to Estonian deputy Enn Tarto, the world will live to regret taking a soft line on this crime, committed, as he says, by official Moscow.

Many deputies in Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnius think that for peoples wanting freedom and independence, the dead president of the Chechen Republic will become, as they put it, a model of opposition to evil designs. In Vilnius today, more than 40 parliamentary deputies signed a telegram of condolences addressed to Dzhokhar Dudayev's widow. The Lithuanian deputies plan to name the square in front of the Russian Embassy in Vilnius as Chechen Square.

For over a year now parliamentary groups supporting Chechnya's independence have been operating in the parliaments of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. They were set up, according to the Baltic deputies, to render humanitarian and moral support to the inhabitants of Ichkeria. It was the deputies in these support groups who were the main movers of the idea to express condolences to Chechnya. According to unofficial reports, the leaders of the Baltic support groups have been having frequent telephone and personal contacts with people from the Chechen president's entourage, especially recently. To judge by all events, Dzhokhar Dudayev's people have already confirmed the fact of the Chechen president's death to their representatives in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

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Russia: Yeltsin Ready for Tripartite Talks on Chechnya

LD0205193096 Moscow NTV in Russian 1800 GMT 2 May 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Russian president plans to visit Chechnya in mid-May. We knew earlier that he was planning to go there, but today the president himself announced the date of the trip in an interview to the Yaroslavl town television channel. He is off there tomorrow. Yeltsin also announced the priorities of his Chechnya policy.

[Begin Yeltsin recording] First, I need to thank the military — the military have done a big job there and one should thank them. Second, to meet the elders. And third, to give them an impetus for talks.

I am certainly open for talks. Yes, it is true that I could not hold talks with Dudayev because he was a person whom the president could not meet, so to speak. But now, if there are some progressive forces there — progressive but in opposition — I am certainly ready to meet the opposition to hold talks.

That is, there should be Zavgayev's side taking part, for example, and the federal side taking part, and the opposition should take part, too, so that these three together should discuss the further fate of the Chechen Republic — as a component part of the Russian Federation, of course. [end recording]

Russia: Yeltsin on Chechnya Talks, Adherence to Reforms

LD0205201896 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1831 GMT 2 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Nelli Grigoryan]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yaroslavl, 2 May — Boris Yeltsin will make 16 visits to Russia's regions including a visit to Chechnya in the middle of May. The Russian president said this in an interview with 'Gortelekanal' [television] company in Yaroslavl, which was broadcast locally tonight on the eve of his visit to this ancient Russian town. "It is necessary to go to Chechnya. First, we need to thank the military for the great work they have done there, second to meet with elders, and third to provide an impulse to negotiations," the president said.

Yeltsin stressed that he is "ready for negotiations" saying "the president could not meet with Dudayev but if there are any sufficiently progressive forces within the opposition this time, then alright, he is ready to meet with them and have talks." At the same time the president said the talks should be held jointly by "Zavgayev's side, the federal side and the opposition, and these three sides should be discussing the fate of the Chechen republic but, obviously, as part of the Russian Federation."

Speaking about the forthcoming elections, Boris Yeltsin said that he was going to visit Yaroslavl, a town of great historical importance to Russia, to talk to people whom he has met many times before and knows them as friendly and welcoming folks. He said he wanted to find out "their opinion of the elections, and whether they will support communists or non-party presidents, and to discuss various stances." Boris Yeltsin said that, as far as he knows, "Yaroslavl is not a part of the 'red belt' and strictly stands for the democratic way of development, market relations and reforms." In this case it will be possible to find a common language because "no-one in Russia can doubt that Yeltsin is for reforms," the president said. "I have proven by my work and adherence to reforms that I am ready to push them forward without going even one step back," the president said.

Russia: Primakov on Importance of Relations With Council of Europe

LD0205203496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1717 GMT 2 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondents Viktor Khrekov and Igor Shchegolev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Strasbourg, 2 May — Russia, and President Boris Yeltsin in particular, attaches great importance to developing relations with the Council of Europe and seeks to make Russia's participation in the work of the organization more effective, Yevgeniy Primakov, Russian foreign minister, said today at an informal meeting of the foreign ministers of the Council of Europe currently held in Strasbourg. They are members of the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe the official meeting of which is to be held on 3 May.

At the same time, Primakov stressed that the Russian Federation expects more consistent and energetic moves on the part of the Council of Europe to protect the rights of the Russian-speaking population outside Russia, in particular in the Baltic countries.

The head of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that beginning from 1997 Russia will make contributions to the budget of the Council of Europe at the level of the "chief contributors." In this connection, naturally, the question arises about the scale of Russian participation in the work of the organization and its secretariat.

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Among other things, Primakov spoke about the situation in Chechnya and Russia's measures to settle the situation in the region. He also said that the Russian Federation intends to deepen cooperation with international organizations in combating crime and terrorism.

Russia: Primakov Wants Council of Europe Part of European Security

LD0205210296 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1935 GMT 2 May 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov has arrived in Strasbourg to take part in the meeting of the Council of Europe Ministerial Committee. This evening he attended an informal meeting of ministers on the subject of Russia.

[Correspondent A. Peslyak] Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov's visit has three goals. The first is to discuss with his counterparts from other European countries such complex issues as the new role of the Council of Europe in a Bosnian settlement, namely, the formation of bodies on human rights and the holding of free elections. He is also to discuss the adaptation of the Council of Europe to the new realities and sign important documents such as a declaration on the protection of journalists during conflicts and situations of tension. He is to discuss and continue the actions of the European youth campaign against racism and intolerance.

[Begin Primakov recording] We want the Council of Europe to become, if not the cornerstone, at least a very important part of the architecture of a European security built without dividing lines and without blocs, and built on the basis of the existence of several organizations and the need to unite the efforts of the Council of Europe, the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe], and so on. [end recording]

Russia: Primakov Says Adopting Democracy Will Take Some Time

LD0305102296 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0700 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov is continuing his stay in Strasbourg. He is taking part in the European Council Ministers' Committee meetings. Addressing the closed meeting of the committee yesterday Primakov said that the process of Russia's adapting to democratic traditions and European values will be a long one.

The head of the Russian Foreign Ministry emphasized that not everything will be done immediately and one should not forget that Russia has its own specific features. Primakov noted that the leadership of the country attaches importance to Russian participation in the Council of Europe. A coordination committee has been created and its work is being supervised by president Boris Yeltsin personally. Speaking about the structure of future European security, the Russian diplomat emphasized that this security will be without dividing lines and blocs.

Russia: Stockholm Talks Discuss Border Issues, Crime, Security

LD0205151296 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1421 GMT 2 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondents Nikolay Vukolov and Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Stockholm, 2 May — Viktor Chernomyrdin, Russian prime minister and Goeran Persson, Swedish prime minister, discussed further development of relations between Russia and Sweden. They discussed bilateral trade, economic ties and responsibility toward strengthening international and European security.

After the meeting more Russian-Swedish talks were held and interdepartmental agreements were signed. The Federal Security Service and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia signed agreements with Sweden's main police department on cooperation in fighting crime. In addition a protocol on cooperation between the Federal Border Service of Russia and the Coast Guard of Sweden was signed.

Russia: Chernomyrdin Urges Swedish Investments in Russian Economy

LD0205193896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1905 GMT 2 May 96

[By Nikolay Vikolov, Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] STOCKHOLM, May 2 (Itar-Tass) — "The Russian market has been created and it has a strong and ramified structure. However, we need investments to develop and strengthen it," said visiting Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin at a meeting with Swedish Prime Minister Goran Perssen today.

During the talks Chernomyrdin stressed that "it was now that it is being decided whether economic reforms and democratic transformations in Russia will be irreversible and Sweden might play a more active role in the development of the Russian economy by means of participating in the Russian market and investing capital."

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According to Chernomyrdin, the overall investments into the Russian economy had reached almost eight billion U.S. dollars and 1.3 trillion roubles by the beginning of 1996. Chernomyrdin expressed confidence that in the near future, foreign investments into the Russian economy will reach the level of 10-12 billion dollars a year. "This is not a ceiling, but it will help ensure stable work and development of the economy of the country," Chernomyrdin said.

During a meeting with Swedish businessmen held at the Swedish Exports Council on Thursday the Russian prime minister declared that "there were no significant political problems in the relations between Russia and Sweden". However, cooperation in the economic field should develop more dynamically, the Russian premier said.

He expressed deep satisfaction with the results of his talks with Swedish Prime Minister Goran Perssen and meetings with King of Sweden Carl XVI Gustaf and chairman of the Swedish parliament Birgitta Dahl.

Chernomyrdin pointed out that the main aim of his visit to Sweden was to inform Swedish partners about accomplishments achieved by Russia in the area of economy last year and promote a more active influx of investments from Sweden into Russia.

Last year, Sweden accounted for 1.8 percent in the overall investments into Russia, closing a list of major world countries in the volume of investments. "In this connection, during today's talks with the Swedish leadership considerable attention was devoted to the shortcomings in trade and industrial cooperation," the prime minister said.

"The time has come to make a resolute breakthrough in these matters," Chernomyrdin said, addressing Swedish entrepreneurs.

"At present, we are on the way to major projects. In particular, a number of Swedish companies suggested an idea of building a gas pipeline with a high capacity 'Russia-Finland-Sweden-Western Europe'." The European Union has shown an interest in this project as well. "Russia is prepared to get actively involved and support these activities," Chernomyrdin said. He believes in good prospects for the project of the construction of a thermal electric power station in Finland carried out on a tripartite basis with Finnish partners. The station will produce energy using Russian gas to supply power to Sweden. "We are also considerably interested in the participation of Swedish companies on a bilateral basis in investing such large-scale projects as the development of the Shtkoman gas condensate deposit, the Prorazlom oil deposit, the building of the Northern sea route in the area of the town of Pechenga. A decision was adopted on the construction of another complex at the Kola nuclear power station. For purposes of financing we are setting up an investment fund with the participation of foreign investors," Chernomyrdin said.

Russia highly appreciates Sweden's experience in nuclear power engineering. "We are prepared for mutually advantageous cooperation with Sweden in the construction of the second complex of the Kola nuclear power station," the prime minister said.

Later in the day Chernomyrdin held a round-table meeting with Swedish businessmen at the "Aksel Junson" concern.

Russia: Chernomyrdin, Swedish Premier Discuss Chechen War

LD0305113496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0957 GMT 3 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondents Nikolay Vukolov and Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Stockholm, 3 May — Viktor Chernomyrdin, head of the Russian Government, told correspondents at a news conference in Stockholm today that the situation in Chechnya was discussed during a talk with Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson. "All the measures and the programme approved by the Russian president will be implemented, both during the pre-election and the post-election period. The conflict in Chechnya has been brewing for years. It did not escalate during 1994 and 1995, it began much earlier. We are not at all happy about it. It is a source of pain and anxiety for us, our problem, Russia's problem. We will sort it out ourselves. We do not need counsellors or advisers. We brought about this problem and it is up to us to settle it.

"There is no secret about the measures which have been decided upon. We will make use of everything in order to solve the problem in Chechnya. We are ready to use, first and foremost, both political and economic measures, as well as talks and military measures, to stop this slaughter."

"I do not know who killed Dudayev and how it was done, and whether Dudayev was killed," the head of the Russian Government said in answer to a question from a Swedish correspondent.

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Russia: Chernomyrdin on Putting Tanks in Baltic States

LD0305114196 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0900 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin leaves today for the island of Visby [Gotland] to take part in a conference of Baltic region countries. Before his departure [from Sweden] by air he met briefly with Russian and Swedish correspondents, at which he summed up the results of the first part of his visit. Here is a report from our correspondent Regina Lukashina.

[Begin Lukashina recording] Summing up the results of his visit to Sweden, Viktor Chernomyrdin said that his meetings with Birgitta Dahl, speaker of the Swedish parliament, King Carl Gustav, and his counterpart Goran Persson, had been very wide-ranging. Particular importance was attached to contacts with Swedish business circles. The eight leading firms have shown clear interest in the possibilities for their involvement in the Russian market and in investment in electrical engineering, metal and wood processing, and the chemical industry.

In answer to correspondents' questions, the Russian prime minister stated once again that Russia's position regarding NATO's eastward expansion is unequivocally negative. However, in the event of the former Soviet Baltic Republics joining the North Atlantic bloc, Russia's position would be similar to Sweden's, namely that every country is entitled to decide its own destiny. Discrimination against the Russian-speaking inhabitants of the Baltic Republics is of greater concern. However, while expressing our dissatisfaction, Viktor Chernomyrdin particularly stressed in response to a rejoinder in the Swedish press: We shall not put our tanks in there, either to protect ethnic Russians or to hamper NATO's eastward expansion. It cannot be that in any sovereign state there is one kind of human rights for some people and another kind for the others.

In addition, Viktor Chernomyrdin touched on the problem of settling the Chechen crisis. We will proceed along the path of negotiations to put a stop to the war, he said, and the presidential program to this end will be carried out in the lead up to the elections and afterward.

When I asked about the advantages of the reciprocal interpenetration of the Russian and Swedish economies, Viktor Chernomyrdin said that Russian manufacturing capacity and raw materials in conjunction with Swedish technologies could successfully operate in the markets of third countries, and there is every prospect of this, since trade turnover is already in excess of $1 billion. [end recording]

Russia: Chernomyrdin on 'Extremely Substantive' Visit to Sweden

LD0205221096 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1838 GMT 2 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondents Nikolay Vukolov and Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Stockholm, 2 May — Russian and Swedish interests coincide on combating international terrorism, organized crime, arms smuggling, and settling regional conflicts.

This conclusion was reached by the Russian and Swedish sides following the intergovernmental talks held today between the Russian delegation led by Russian Government Chairman Viktor Chernomyrdin and the Swedish delegation led by Prime Minister Goeran Persson.

At a news conference Viktor Chernomyrdin is to give tomorrow morning, the Russian delegation will sum up the final results of the visit. ITAR-TASS correspondents have learned, however, from sources in the Russian delegation that, addressing an official dinner given by the Swedish prime minister today, the Russian prime minister described the visit as "extremely substantive." In addition to a package of three documents on cooperation and interaction between the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Federal Security Service, and the Federal Border Service of Russia and relevant services in Sweden, the sides revealed a "coincidence of interests" in matters relating to nuclear and ecological security and spoke openly about improving mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation. Chernomyrdin expressed "readiness to spread the traditional forms of cooperation to new spheres such as the conversion of military industries and supplies of military equipment, a joint development of space and the integration of the power grids of the two countries."

At the same time, speaking about Russia's recent entry into the Council of Europe, the Russian prime minister said that "our country intends in a very short period of time to bring its national legislation in line with the norms of the Council of Europe."

Russia: Zyuganov: Baltics Exist on Russian Raw Materials

WS0305083896 Tallinn BNS in English 1900 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riga, May 2, BNS — The economic boom of the Baltic states is based on Russian raw materials and will be over at the moment when communists come to power in Russia, Russian Communist Party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov said.

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"The Baltic states cannot exist without parasitizing on Russia," Zyuganov told the Riga-based AM-Segodna newspaper that is published in Russian.

"Estonia (...) is the fifth largest color metal seller in the world with no mines, no metal processors because everything (it sells) has been stolen in Russia," he said.

The Balts will be left with nothing to be proud of if "normal state power in Russia stops this plunder," Zyuganov noted.

Zyuganov, who will run for president in the June 16 elections, claims that Russia does not trade with the Baltics at world prices.

"Some of our politicians have said that it is necessary to bring tanks into the Baltic states but there is not need for it as it is enough to set world prices for the fuel and raw materials supplied to the Baltics," he said.

Zyuganov is the most popular Russian presidential candidate in Latvia, according to an opinion poll carried out by the Socialekspert firm.

Anybody can take part in the opinion poll that is carried out in the Latvian capital, Riga.

Nearly 74 percent of the 1,500 respondents in the poll have said that they prefer Zyuganov.

Alexander Lebed of the Congress of Russian Communities ranks the second and Liberal Democrat Vladimir Zhirinovskiy the third, while incumbent President Boris Yeltsin occupies the fourth position.

The poll will continue until the presidential elections on June 16. The term was extended from May 1 because the organizers concluded that it was too short to get objective results.

As many as 10 candidates have been confirmed for the presidential elections in Russia.

Russia: Defense Minister Grachev Arrives in Armenia

LD0205141796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1403 GMT 2 May 96

[By Tigran Liloyan and Mikhail Shevtsov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YEREVAN, May 2 (Itar-Tass) — Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev has arrived in Yerevan today on a working visit at the invitation of Armenian Defence Minister Vazgen Sarkisyan. The visit is taking place in accordance with a bilateral agreement on military cooperation. During the visit Grachev will meet Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Prime Minister and other Armenian politicians.

Heads of defence ministries of Russia and Armenia will hold a working conference today. Grachev told journalists at the airport that ten agreements would be signed and another document initialed during the conference. The sides would also endorse a plan for bilateral cooperation for 1996. According to Grachev, a list of these documents is practically similar to the documents signed with Kazakhstan, Belarus, Ukraine and Georgia.

The Russian Defence Minister will visit a number of units of the Armenian armed forces and familiarize himself with every-day life of the personnel of Russian military units stationed in Armenia.

Grachev believes that cooperation between Russia and Armenia in the military field is "most successful among the CIS countries." According to Grachev, the sides have positively resolved the problem of joint air defence, deployment of troops, interaction between the armed forces of the two countries, adding that military-technical cooperation was developing at a proper level as well.

"During this conference we shall go ahead and agree to draw a plan in the near future for the use of the Armenian and Russian armed forces in a coalition if need be," Grachev said.

Russia: Moscow Denies Middle East Policy Has Failed

LD0205163096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1241 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 2 (Interfax) — Assertions that Russia's Mid East policy has failed "do not correspond to reality," a senior Russian diplomat has declared, regretting "attempts to remove Russia from efforts toward settling this conflict."

"Some U.S. administration officials are sometimes tempted to show the world that there is just one superpower, ruling the world and capable of returning peace to the Middle East," the diplomat remarked.

"From time to time, we observe such a desire, and, that obviously, somehow disappoints Moscow and compels it to explain to those who make supremacy claims that we are not going to compete with them and that the common task is altogether different," the diplomat pointed out, adding that "the time of the cold war passed long time ago, and we are not going to run some races."

"We have agreed to work together and are trying to meet this agreement. That is the firm position of Moscow," the diplomat said.

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He stressed that "Americans would have failed to get exchanges of fire between Israel and Hizballah halted on their own."

To prove that, he recalled that the signed accord on a ceasefire in Lebanon is "actually not the same what U.S. initially proposed."

According to the source, the American proposals in fact repeated Israel's demand that Hizballah disarm in full, disband its military wing, and stop its struggle against the occupation of the so-called security zone in southern Lebanon.

"Obviously, these proposals had no chance to succeed, and the final document, taking the interests of both sides into account, was drafted with Russia's most active participation," the diplomat said.

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Political Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Signs Decree on 22,000-Strong Peacekeeping Force

LD0305075096 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0707 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 3 May (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has signed a decree "On the formation of a special military contingent within the armed forces of the Russian Federation to participate in maintaining or restoring international peace and security". ITAR-TASS was informed of this today by the head of state's press service.

The Russian president has decreed that "a special military contingent to participate in maintaining and restoring international peace and security, consisting of 17 motorized rifle and four airborne battalions numbering up to 22,000 men, is to be formed before 1 December 1996 within the stipulated manning limits of the Russian Federation's armed forces."

The Russian defense minister is instructed to approve within a month a list of formations and military units to belong to the above-mentioned special military contingent.

Under the decree, the Russian Government is directed "within three months to approve a statute on a special military contingent to participate in maintaining or restoring international peace and security; to provide in the stipulated way for the financing of the expenditure connected with the establishment and training of the special military contingent; and to provide from 1997 a separate article in federal draft budgets for allocations to maintain the special military contingent during the period of its participation in the maintenance or restoration of international peace and security."

Russia: Yeltsin Sends Resolutions on Draft Laws to Duma

LD0205203796 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1408 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 2 May (Itar-Tass) — President Boris Yeltsin has passed to the Duma his resolution on the draft bill "Particular aspects of implementing the citizens' constitutional rights on land." The presidential press service said the resolution pointed to the bill's inconsistencies with the constitution and other legal acts, including the civic code. The president points to the "low quality" of the document and suggests that it should be turned down and that the questions raised in the document should be resolved by the Russian land code.

In another resolution the president said it would be unadvisable to introduce amendments to the law "On general principles of organizing local self-governing in the Russian Federation." A bill that was put forward in the Duma by the Altay Territory assembly proposes that restrictions banning municipal officers from becoming deputies of the representative bodies of local self-governing should be abolished. The president said that such questions, however, are within the competence of the law on the principles of municipal service.

The president also suggested that the wording of one of the amendments to the law on income tax, which are currently under consideration in the Duma, should also be changed. The main thrust of the president's proposal is to financially support people working in the sphere of science and education.

Russia: Premier: Moscow Still Ready for Talks With Chechen Separatists

LD0205162196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1241 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 2 (Interfax) — Russia's Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin has reaffirmed Moscow's desire to continue talks with any Chechen representatives, field commanders or politicians.

In an interview with an Interfax reporter at Moscow's Vnukovo-2 airport before departure for Sweden, Chernomyrdin noted that Moscow is ready "to meet with all who can really want to help to settle the conflict in Chechnya." He confirmed readiness for unconditional negotiations "at any level" but within the framework of a political settlement in Chechnya.

Chernomyrdin stressed that Moscow's position over the republic is "unchanged in any event," and its core is President Yeltsin's peace plan for Chechnya.

Reaffirming the firm desire to translate this plan into effect, Chernomyrdin said that whether "some may not like this, there is only one way — to end this war at any cost by using all levers — political, economic, negotiating, and military if needed to curb terrorism."

He warned that the federal authorities "have curbed and will curb as ruthlessly as ever" all terrorist actions by illegal armed units in Chechnya.

In his opinion, Chechen field commanders should finally show reason and assist a peace settlement in Chechnya.

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Russia: Cossacks' Union Urges Yeltsin, Zyuganov To Hold Negotiations

LD0205162696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1241 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 2 (Interfax) — The Cossacks' Union has urged the main presidential candidates, Boris Yeltsin and Gennadiy Zyuganov, to enter into negotiations before June's presidential elections without preliminary conditions.

The appeal forwarded by the union to Interfax on Thursday also urges the remaining candidates to "stop impairing the foundations of Russia's statehood" and drop from the presidential race. "This will facilitate the dialogue for the main contenders and make it possible for them to find a road to concord," the appeal points out.

Russia is going through "one of the hardest times in its history," the appeal says. "There are no political differences the country's unity and territorial integrity can be sacrificed to," the appeal says.

"A sharp change in the political course can lead to an explosion, armed confrontation and disintegration of the nucleus of Russian statehood," the appeal says.

"Russia needs two or three years of civic peace and quiet in order to withstand," the Cossacks' Union stresses in its appeal.

Russia: Zyuganov: Farm Land 'Must Be Owned by Those Who Cultivate It'

LD0205163196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1241 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 2 (Interfax) — Farm land "must be owned by those who cultivate it and are responsible for the effectiveness of its use," said Communist Party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov. This demand is not his election slogan, he told Interfax. The Communist Party worked out together with the Agrarian Party "a program for rebuilding the agroindustrial complex ruined by the so-called reforms," he said.

According to Zyuganov, the program "provides for everything — from resolving the problems of road building and supplying rural population centers with natural gas to agronomic issues."

In Russia there is enough room for all forms of farming — from collective farms to individual farms," he said.

However farm land must not be sold, since it "would inevitably become the target of profiteering;" it only must be leased with the right to inherit the lease. According to Zyuganov, Russian citizens must be able to freely use their kitchen gardens, orchards and land on which something is built, but if farm land begins to be sold out, we shall lose Russia, since a country belongs to those who own land."

Zyuganov also called for making the prices of farm produce conform to those of agricultural equipment, since in the years of reforms "one half of tractors and harvesters has been ruined, while three biggest plants making harvesters (in Taganrog, Rostov and Krasnoyarsk) are standing idle."

In addition Zyuganov called for making it easier for agricultural producers to buy farm equipment and mineral fertilizers, and use transport and electricity.

Russia: Zhirinovskiy Says Russia Needs New 'Tough' Policy

LD0205185196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1633 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 2 (Interfax) — Liberal Democratic presidential candidate Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is sure Russia needs a new policy, harsh and tough which only he can pursue. At a Thursday rally in the heart of Moscow he spoke for adopting a new national flag. In his opinion St. Andrew's flag should be made the national flag "to unite the people."

Zhirinovskiy attacked the Russian press saying "cowardly and mercenary journalists are fooling the people."

He also said "a small but smart people has occupied all banks and newspapers". Zhirinovskiy named the daily IZVESTIYA as an example and called its editor-in-chief Igor Golembiovskiy an enemy of Russia. He also said NTV broadcasting company is fully dependent on the CIA.

Zhirinovskiy claimed the voice of truth comes only from the mouth of the leader of Liberal Democrats. According to the police, 1,000 to 1,500 people listened to his speech.

Media Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Signs Decree on Presidential Press Service

LD0305122696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1221 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 3 (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has signed a decree on the presidential press service.

The service is in charge of providing communication between the president and mass media, providing information on the president's activities to media, organising coverage for events attended by the president in

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the country and abroad, informing the president of the mass media's position, public opinion and press, radio and television comments on the president's speeches and desicions.

The press service performs its tasks in interaction with the president's aides as well as with the presidential administration departments.

Military Issues

Russia: Commander Kuroyedov Interviewed on Pacific Fleet Exercises

MM0305093396 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 0500 GMT 29 Apr 96

[From the "Novosti" newscast: Video report by Anna Abonosimova, identified by caption, on the biggest exercises in the history of the Pacific Fleet which have ended in the Far East; figures in brackets denote broadcast time in GMT in hours, minutes, and seconds]

[FBIS Translated Text] [050547] [Abonosimova over video of warships, submarine at sea] The unique nature of these exercises lies not only in their duration and geographical scope, but also in the number of engaged combat forces. Seventy surface ships and submarines carried out almost 200 combat training tasks in an area extending from Maritime Kray to Kamchatka.

These were the first exercises under the command of Vladimir Kuroyedov, the new Pacific Fleet commander. He was born in the Far East and has spent most of his career in the Pacific with the exception of the past three years when he served in the Baltic. In what state did he find the fleet? Quantitative cuts of over 50 percent have just been completed.

[Admiral V.I. Kuroyedov, commander of the Pacific Fleet, identified by caption] The quality of the fleet has improved and is still improving. Nowadays we replace whole groups of ships or submarines with just one ship or submarine. Therefore I do not see any particular changes in the fleet's combat readiness or combat capability, and I would not say that the fleet is dying.

[Abonosimova] The new commander is planning a structural reorganization of the fleet.

[Kuroyedov] The main objective is the fleet's combat readiness. However, in our quest for combat readiness we must not forget the people.

[Abonosimova] The commander is convinced that the Pacific Fleet is still the largest naval formation in the Pacific and one of the leading fleets in the world. He believes that the difficult economic situation can be improved. One of the ways to do this is by scrapping decommissioned ships. Last year the Pacific Fleet sold more than 50 ships. A substantial part of the proceeds went to the fleet. But the sum could have been one-third higher, had the ships been scrapped in our country and not abroad. We have a base, what is needed is new equipment. And there are plenty of trained specialists. Anna Abonosimova, Yan Savitskiy reporting for Russian Public Television from Vladivostok. [050725] [video shows fleet exercises, Kuroyedov interview]

Regional Affairs

Russia: Yeltsin Arrives in Yaroslavl for One-Day Visit

LD0305054296 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0514 GMT 3 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Nelli Grigoryan]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yaroslavl, 3 May (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin arrived in Yaroslavl on a one-day visit today to see for himself what the situation in the region is like.

His itinerary starts with a visit to the monument to the city's founder, Yaroslavl the Wise. Then, after laying flowers in the Leontyevskoye cemetery, the president will go to the military finance college, meet members of the public, and visit the Tolgskiy convent.

Boris Yeltsin will make 16 trips to Russia's regions in May, including a visit to Chechnya in mid-May.

Russia: Program of Yeltsin's 3 May Visit to Yaroslavl Detailed

LD0205184496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1633 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YAROSLAVL, May 2 (Interfax) — The program of President Yeltsin's one-day visit to Yaroslavl planned for Friday [3 May] became known on Thursday. "We planned a human, not bureaucratic, program that will make it possible to speak with people and learn how they are prepared for the upcoming elections, what their thoughts are like," Yeltsin told TV reporters from Yaroslavl who visited him in the Kremlin.

Friday morning Yeltsin will meet with Yaroslavl residents at the monument to the founder of their city Prince Yaroslav the Wise. Yeltsin took part in unveiling the monument in the autumn of 1993.

Subsequently the president will lay flowers on the graves of soldiers at the local memorial cemetery and meet with World War II and Afghan war veterans.

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Friday afternoon Yeltsin will visit the local military financial school, confer with representatives of the local public and visit the reconstructed Tolg convent.

His visit to Yaroslavl's engines-making plant has been cancelled, evidently because May 3 is a holiday and because the president did not want to focus on production topics, even though he promised that in Yaroslavl he would announce some new measures aimed at stabilizing industrial development.

His wife Naina will accompany Yeltsin on his trip to Yaroslavl. She will visit the local children's center of social rehabilitation, a boarding school and a secondary school.

He intends to visit 16 Russian cities in May, Yeltsin told journalists from Yaroslavl.

In comments on the possibility of Yeltsin's meetings with the staff of regional TV companies, his press secretary Sergey Medvedev said "the representatives of regional TV companies must meet with the president directly more often." "This will make it possible to avoid the shortage of information as to what happens in the Kremlin, what is planned and how, why one decision or another is taken," Medvedev said.

According to him, such meetings will help provincial journalists "to understand the president better."

Russia: Yeltsin 'Certainly Open for Talks' With Chechen Opposition

LD0205172796 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1600 GMT 2 May 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Boris Yeltsin intends to visit 16 Russian towns this month. He is going to Yaroslavl tomorrow. On the eve of this one-day visit, the president gave an interview in the Kremlin to the Yaroslavl TV channel, which we have just received from our colleagues in Yaroslavl:

[begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] Boris Nikolayevich, there have been media reports saying that you are going to visit Chechnya in mid-May. Is it true?

[Yeltsin] Yes, I need to go to Chechnya. First, I need to thank the military — the military have done a big job there and one should thank them. Second, to meet the elders. And third, to give them an impetus for talks.

I am certainly open for talks. Yes, it is true that I could not hold talks with Dudayev because he was a person whom the president could not meet, so to speak. But now, if there are some progressive forces there — progressive but in opposition — I am certainly ready to meet the opposition to hold talks. [end recording]

Russia: Primakov Says Status of Chechnya 'Negotiable'

AU0305100996 Paris AFP in English 1002 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Strasbourg, May 3 (AFP) — Visiting Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov on Friday ruled out any prospect of Chechnya gaining independence from Moscow but left the door open to negotiation on granting broad autonomy to the Moslem republic.

"Everything is negotiable, everything can be put on the table, including all kinds of status for Chechnya, provided it respects the territorial integrity of Russia," Primakov told journalists.

Primakov's words echoed the general Russian line, put forward at the end of March in a peace formula by President Boris Yeltsin, that Moscow is prepared to negotiate peace with rebel separatists and offer a fair degree of autonomy, but cannot permit Chechen independence.

It was the independence drive, led by former "president" Dzhokhar Dudayev, which prompted the Russian intervention in December 1994 which spawned a bitter 16-month war which has left more than 30,000 dead, most of them civilians.

The Russian minister, participating for the first time at the Council of Europe's executive body, the Committee of Ministers, added that Dudayev's death late last month had left separatist forces in disarray.

Russia: Chechen Officers Vow To Maintain War Effort

AU0205165696 Paris AFP in English 1639 GMT 2 May 96

[Report by Sebastian Smith]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Groznyy, Russia, May 2 (AFP) — Huge columns of black smoke from burning oil drifted over the Chechen capital Grozny and artillery thundered in several villages Thursday [2 May], making a farce of President Boris Yeltsin's claim that the war in Chechnya was over.

The sinister sight of thick smoke belching from three oil refinery fires too hot to be extinguished was just the most visible sign that the war between Russian forces and Chechen independence fighters was still raging.

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Dozens of artillery shells fired at close range burst on the outskirts of the eastern village of Alleroy at dawn Thursday.

Warplanes pounded the village of Komsomolskoye in southwest Chechnya for two days despite a peace accord signed by village elders earlier this week, witnesses said.

Four civilians were wounded, two seriously, in the air raids Tuesday and Wednesday, witnesses said.

An AFP correspondent recently saw sniper bullets smacking into the village streets from Russian positions out on the plains.

Nearby Goyskoye was pounded by artillery Thursday. The village, like several others, is now no more than a battlefield where fighters armed with anti-tank rockets and assault rifles are holding off Russian armour.

In the southeast mountain village of Benoi, paraffin from a destroyed oil works is pouring into the local river, a tributary of the main Terek river which eventually empties into the fish-rich Caspian Sea, the area's rebel commander Khunka Israpilov said.

Many Russians thought Chechen resistance would crumble after the death of charismatic rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev on April 21, in what the rebels said was a targeted Russian missile attack.

But the rebels have a growing number of young, experienced commanders who will stop at nothing.

"Killing our president will make it even worse for them. They can kill all of us commanders, but each time others will stand up," said Israpilov, a lean martial arts expert.

"Of course, the death of Dudayev was a big loss," he said. "But since then, I've become much stronger, I have a new thirst for independence. There is no doubt we will win in the end."

Israpilov, 29, is among the battle-hardened young commanders such as Shamil Basayev and Ruslan Gelayev who lead the rebellion at the frontline.

"This time last year, there were few experienced fighters or commanders," he said. "But today, any field commander is capable of carrying out independent operations."

Israpilov, who played a major role in the Chechen raid in January on the neighbouring Russian republic of Dagestan, said he would stop at nothing to drive Russian troops out.

"I don't remember which journalist it was I told that I wouldn't take hostages, but I'm sorry — today when the Russians surround our villages with armoured personnel carriers and say 'we'll destroy you with airplanes,' we have to use the same methods," he said.

"They have been terrorising us for almost two years," he said.

Rebel chief of staff Aslan Maskhadov said he would switch from frontal warfare, in which the Chechens are badly outnumbered and outgunned, to guerrilla warfare — which the mobile, motivated Chechens have proven they do well.

"The war has gone on for more than 18 months," Maskhadov told AFP last week in a thick wood in the Caucasus mountains.

Later he told a press conference at a secret location: "We'll attack from the left, the right, the back. They won't know where we hit them from."

Gelayev, a big bearded man, said Chechen commanders had become resigned to more war following Dudayev's death.

"I cannot say I see peace, because Russia is preventing it. On television they keep saying the war is over and that a ceasefire is in effect. But it goes on every day," he said.

More than 30,000 people, mostly civilians, have died in the separatist conflict which erupted in December 1994.

Russia: Special Operations Carried Out in Several Chechen Districts

LD0305090596 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0807 GMT 3 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Boris Kipkeyev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 3 May (ITAR-TASS) — In the past 24 hours firing continued on the positions of the federal troops deployed in the Chechen Republic in the vicinity of the inhabited localities of Orekhovo, Bamut, Staryy Achkhoy, and Goyskoye. The ITAR-TASS correspondent was told this by the Russian Defense Ministry's information department. A total of 17 instances of firing were recorded, including 13 in Groznyy.

Yesterday, in response to a request by the inhabitants of Shali district center, the command of the federal troops extended by another 48 hours the ultimatum deadline for the fulfillment of their demands: the surrender of weapons by the separatists and the release of prisoners of war. Despite this, late yesterday evening, a road block of the motorized rifle brigade was fired on from Shali, the information department of the Russian Defense Ministry said.

The Defense Ministry's information department also said that in the past 24 hours special operations were

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carried out in the inhabited localities of Vedeno, Dyshne-Vedeno, and Kharachoy in Vedenskiy district.

Russia: Chechen Militants in Shali 'Categorically Reject Talks'

LD0205172996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1541 GMT 2 May 96

[By Oleg Artyushin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, May 2 (Itar-Tass) — The number of well-armed Chechen militants who gathered in a stronghold in the city of Shali (30 kilometers southeast of Groznyy) by 15:00 p.m. today was around 300, said chairman of the government of the Chechen republic Nikolay Koshman. According to Koshman, the "militants categorically reject talks." Koshman said that he was prepared to go to Shali himself to begin a dialogue with the Chechen separatists in order to prevent a military operation which might begin as soon as the deadline (17:00 p. m. Moscow time) set for the militants to surrender expires.

Koshman said that the Chechen government would do everything possible to prevent destruction of the city. He did not rule out that the ultimatum might be extended and that a special operation planned by federal forces against the militants would be postponed. Koshman dismissed the tactics chosen by the separatists as "banally simple: to fire from behind a human shield of women and children so as to provoke a tragedy similar to what happened in Sernovodsk, Samashki and Goiskoye."

Meanwhile, mayor of the city of Shali Musa Dakayev told Itar-Tass that the population of the city was preparing for evacuation since the militants would not agree to go away from Shali. Dakayev said that the elders of the city who were attempting to begin a dialogue with the separatists had encountered strong opposition from irreconcilable field-commanders who refuse to lay down arms.

If the sides fail to come to terms and the federal command decides to launch a special operation against the militants, the local authorities will ask to open a corridor for the exodus of 15,000 peaceful civilians from the city. Dakayev believes that the defiant militants intend to provoke federal forces to use force, which would cause heavy damage to the city. According to Dakayev, reports reached him that "reinforcements had been perpetually arriving from other areas of Chechnya to join the militants in Shali."

Chechen Premier Koshman was told that "a big sum of money in hard currency" had been brought from abroad to the separatists remaining in Shali.

According to the latest report from Shali, federal forces will not begin a military operation against the militants in Shali today. An ultimatum issued to the separatists has been extended, a duty officer from the headquarters of the North-Caucasian military district told Itar-Tass from Rostov-on-Don. However, the duty officer did not specify a new deadline set for the separatists.

At 18:30 p.m. the talks between the elders and the militants were going on. The talks are being attended by Premier of the Chechen government Nikolay Koshman and representatives of the command of a group of the Russian Defence Ministry stationed in Chechnya, first Chechen Vice-Premier Abdula Bugayev told Itar-Tass. The main demand made on the Chechen militants is to surrender weapons. If this demand is not complied with troops, commander Vladimir Shamanov intends to carry out a military operation to liquidate the separatists whose number has reached 300. The previous ultimatum delivered to the separatists expired at 15:00 p.m. Moscow time today.

According to different sources, the number of peaceful civilians staying in Shali now is about 15,000.

According to a report which came to Itar-Tass at 19:00 p.m Thursday from Chechen Vice-Premier Abdula Bugayev, talks with the Chechen militants remaining in a stronghold in Shali will be resumed on Friday. Bugayev reported to Itar-Tass with reference to chairman of the Chechen government Nikolay Koshman who is currently staying in Shali.

Russia: Maskhadov Proposes Reviving Supervisory Commission in Shali

LD0205214796 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 2045 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 3 May (ITAR-TASS) — Aslan Maskhadov, Pro-Dudayev forces chief of staff, "has proposed reviving the special supervisory commission as an experiment in one specific district, Shali, to ease tension there and avert large-scale clashes that could cause numerous casualties." This was reported to ITAR-TASS late on Thursday evening by Salambek Maygov, to whom the proposal was conveyed. Maygov is the head of the Pan-Russian "Bashlam" movement and cochairman of the Chechnya Coordination Council.

Salambek Maygov said he "returned from Chechnya three days ago and had visited Shali." "The last person I saw before leaving was Aslan Maskhadov, with whom I am constantly in contact. I am making this statement on his behalf," Maygov said.

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Russia: Chechen Leader Says Shali Situation 'Reasonable'

LD0305111296 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0934 GMT 3 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondennt Oleg Artushin]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 3 May (Itar-Tass) — "The situation in Shali has reached a reasonable level," Nikolay Koshman, chairman of the Chechen Republic Government, told journalists today. He said that the command of the federal forces had granted the militants entrenched in Shali a further two days to fulfil the demands of the ultimatum which has been extended twice. The demands remain the same — the surrender of weapons and military equipment, handing over of the captured servicemen of the federal forces, and the restoration of legal authority in Shali.

Nikolay Koshman said that no mass exodus of the civilian population from Shali was being observed. Refugees from Vedeno District were being seen arriving in the town.

Nikolay Koshman considers that the main task for the Chechen Republic Government in resolving the crisis around Shali was to prevent the town from being destroyed like Samashki and Sernovodsk. He believes that the chances of a peaceful resolution are quite high.

With regard to the situation in the Chechen Republic as a whole, Nikolay Koshman said that it was "manageable." He said that work was being completed on restoring the power supply to part of Groznyy after the sabotage a few days ago of the southern heat and power supply station and the Asinovskaya-Groznyy section of the power line.

However, Nikolay Koshman noted a considerable increase in thefts of oil which has forced the government to halt the work of the republic's oil industry until strict control procedures are established over oil extraction and oil refining.

Russia: Chechnya: Legitimate Power Bodies To Function in Shali

LD0305085596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0825 GMT 3 May 96

[By Oleg Artyushin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY May 3 (Itar-Tass) — The legitimate bodies of State power — the Administration of the District and the City, police, the court, the Prosecutor's Office — are to begin functioning in Shali on Friday, Municipal Administration chief Musa Dakayev has told Itar-Tass. An understanding to this effect was reached during Thursday's talks with the leaders of the separatists' groups in Shali. The ultimatum, which expired at 13:00 GMT on Thursday, was extended for 48 hours.

The surrender of arms and military equipment, the release of prisoners of war, and a withdrawal of the unlawful armed formations from Shali are to begin during the period, Dakayev said. The Mayor of Shali said that all members of the unlawful armed formations, with the exception of those who committed crimes, may avail themselves of the right to return to peaceful life.

An operation by Federal troops to check compliance with passport regulations in Shali may begin not earlier than Sunday, Dakayev said.

Economic Issues

Russia: World Bank Grants $200 Million Loan to Regions

LD0205184696 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1758 GMT 2 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Andrey Loshchilin]

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 2 May (TASS) — The World Bank board has approved the loan of $200 million to the Russian Federation government to fund a social infrastructure improvement project in Novosibirsk and Rostov Regions.

The total cost of the program undertaken jointly by the Russian Federation government and the World Bank is $288.1 million. The Russian Federation will finance $88.1 million of it from its own budget. The project involves construction of three new schools and restoration of 38 existing ones, modernisation of medical facilities, reconstruction of 62 trunk water mains, and construction of sewage treatment facilities. Also under the program assistance will be given for regional and district administrations to train personnel in modern accounting systems and financial management.

The World Bank loan is given to Russia for 17 years with no payments to be made within the first five years.

Russia: Impact of Election Outcome on Business

964E1075A Moscow INTERFAKS - AIF in Russian 1-7 Apr 96 No 13, pp 1, 11

[Article by Ilya Sinyutkin: "The Domestic Bourgeoisie on the Eve of the Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At the same time that the government has been waging a desperate battle against nonpayments and taking care of other campaign issues while trying to stay within the confines of its announced

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economic policy, the heads of the Russian business community have been preoccupied with their own problems, which are usually concealed from the uninitiated. Today, however, this imperceptible battled for survival, for new sources of profits, and for influence could have an unpredictable effect on the elections.

An Inquiry into Concepts

Many people doubt the existence of a stratum of businessmen in Russia capable of influencing the state's economic policymaking. Some people are irritated that this supposed stratum includes the heads of companies that could not be described as thriving concerns.

In fact, the whole idea of rating businessmen in order of their influence—a highly hypothetical concept—is distasteful to some people. This concept, however, reflects concrete aspects of Russian reality and points up some interesting tendencies.

The conflicting court decisions in privatization and tax cases are a reflection of the struggle between the influential businessmen. So are the attempts to hold onto the constantly dwindling privileges related to imports, exports, taxes, and credits. The fact that some businessmen have managed to win deputy seats and are even campaigning for the office of head of state attests to their organizational skill in work with the public, if not to their popularity. That is why the weekly INTERFAKS - AIF is publishing another list of the most influential businessmen in Russia.

The New Influence of Former State Officials

The operating mechanisms of modern Russian business and its influence in national economics and politics have grown more distinct in recent years. Former Komsomol members and party obkom personnel are not the only officials going into business today. Former democratic ministers, deputies, and directors of former state enterprises are also active in big business. The immediate rise of the country's former chief banker, Viktor Gerashchenko, to the ranks of the top 20 influential businessmen is indicative in this context.

Here is another example: Marshal Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov, who was the CIS minister of defense, now heads Aeroflot, the largest Russian airline, which is involved in a serious competitive struggle in the air transport market (although it is true that his name is still not on the list of the most influential businessmen).

There is nothing disgraceful about this. In the United States, for example, former senators and former defense secretaries and vice presidents occupy seats on the boards of large industrial and financial corporations after they leave politics.

If studies comparable to those published in INTERFAKS - AIF were to be conducted overseas, all of these "formers" would certainly be among the most influential businessmen.

(The fact that the rules of play are quite specific in the West and are secured more or less strictly by law is a different matter. In addition, there is no threat of a communist takeover there. This, however, will be discussed later.)

Chubays himself has already announced his intention to head a company that will offer management consulting services to privatized enterprises. At this time, the "father of Russian privatization" is still mobilizing businessmen for protection of the achievements of economic reform and trying to organize the defense of the inviolability of private property. Many, if not all, of the members of the business elite agree with him.

The nature of the problems the "influentials" are encountering today and the maneuvers they have had to undertake in this context are an indication that the reform still is not irreversible, even though Gorbachev was already insisting that it was when he was in office.

The Communists Make Promises and Offer Reassurance

INTERFAKS - AIF knows for certain that Gennadiy Andreyevich Zyuganov has already had personal meetings and, apparently, will continue to have these meetings with the Russian business elite, especially the bankers. He has had private conversations with them and group meetings to discuss the financing of the Communist Party in the 1996 campaign and the changes in Russian economic policy in the event of a communist victory on 16 June.

According to available information, the CPRF has promised some banks the redistribution of spheres of influence. There is nothing, however, that it can promise some other banks today.

In any case, whatever the outcome of the presidential race, money will not be abolished, but the direction of financial flows could change. During meetings with financiers, the leaders of the Communist Party have implied that there will be some changes in the composition of the "authorized" (in the broad sense of the term) group of banks. This would seem to offer new opportunities to the banks and enterprises that felt left out of privatization and the distribution of budget resources. The elections could give them a chance to improve their own situation. Meanwhile, the Communists seem to be trying (and, judging by all indications, with some success) to use Lenin's technique of taking advantage of

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"inter-imperialist conflicts" for the attainment of personal goals.

According to some sources, those who have not received any specific promises from the CPRF have simply been told that they have nothing to worry about, that their board members will simply be joined by a new member, one of the CPRF's "own."

Sensing the strong probability of major changes, the banks that are now in favor with the government are beginning to examine their options. These options are based on the assessment of their own position and the prospect of a communist victory.

One of the specific forms of insurance, according to the bankers themselves, is maximum convergence with the banks that are most likely to become "authorized" under the Communists. To this end, they are signing special agreements, establishing the best possible conditions for cooperation and for organizational and financial convergence, and establishing broader personal ties. These processes are being observed by the administrators of enterprises in the branches that are the last to be financed today but could become priority fields tomorrow.

Things are not that simple, however, because the next day there is a telephone call from the other camp, with exactly the same requests and extremely similar promises....

There is also a "third force," which is not clearly defined and does not have a specific leader, but it is making progress, and it will also want money.... What should businessmen do in this situation? Difficult decisions have to be made by the "rich and influential," but some of them are not ready for this.

It is interesting that few of the influential businessmen are ideologically inflexible. Few have made an unequivocal choice. There might be some of these businessmen among those who definitely can afford to adhere to class principles even when the stakes are extremely high, or among those who are certain to suffer from a change of government. The reader can figure out who they are by looking at the INTERFAKS - AIF list.

The Reforms Are Reversible

The elections will be a watershed in the life and work of the post- perestroyka Russian business elite and a test of its corporate and class ideology—an ideology that should correspond to some statewide interests. These interests, however, are so new that they are still rather vague and have never been articulated, except by today's Communists. It is true that the Communists have not said anything new, but no one can counter the party program with anything equally balanced and persuasive.

Not all of the businessmen who are considered to be influential are actually capable of formulating the principles of an economic policy that would correspond completely to these unarticulated statewide interests. Some might describe the kind of conditions that would be most favorable for the development and growth of their own companies and the generation of maximum profits. Others might be capable of this and would like to do this, but never seem to find the time. Most of the influential businessmen, however, seem never to have given this a single thought....

The individuals who have called themselves "entrepreneurs" for several years have been unable to agree on the principles of their own activity and loudly declare the need to abide by these principles. The warnings of a few individuals who pointed out the need for an economic policy that would foster more than just the high profit margins of the celebrated "new Russians" were futile. It is precisely the egotism of the "influentials" (otherwise known as the domestic bourgeoisie), their nearsightedness, and their lack of long-range goals and the basic instinct for self-preservation that guarantee the reversibility of all of the reforms that gave them so much.

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International Affairs

Ukraine: Deputy Minister Elected Head of UN Group

LD0205221796 Kiev Radio Ukraine World Service in English 2100 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry press center, Viktor Hladush, head of the Ukrainian delegation and first deputy minister for foreign economic relations and trade, was elected deputy chairperson of the D group of the UN Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], whose ninth plenary session opened today for two days.

The D group comprises eastern and central European nations. The Ukrainian diplomat's speech at the opening session focused on UNCTAD's growing role in solving the plethora of economic, financial, and social problems in nations with transient-type economies, with the view of facilitating their integration processes.

Ukraine: Peace-Keeping Forces in Bosnia Rotated

LD0305055996 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0510 GMT 3 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Galina Nekrasova]

[FBIS Translated Text] Lvov, 3 May — Rotation of staff from the Ukrainian 240th special battalion which forms part of the multinational forces enforcing the peace accords in Bosnia began today. The ITAR-TASS correspondent learned this at Ukraine's Defense Ministry. The Ukrainian battalion is under French command. The first of 500 servicemen, who were trained at the motorized infantry division base outside Dnepropetrovsk, have departed for Bosnia on Il-76 aircraft of the Ukrainian Air Force.

Ukraine: Nationalist Leader Claims Dudayev Still Alive

LD0205213996 Kiev UNIAR in Ukrainian 1845 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A UNIAR correspondent has met Dmytro Korchynskyy, deputy chairman of the Ukrainian National Assembly (UNA), and asked him to comment on the sensational statement by UNA, to the effect that Dzhokhar Dudayev is alive.

[Correspondent] What is the source of information that Dzhokhar Dudayev is alive?

[Korchynskyy] We maintain relations with Dudayev's relatives. They have told us that Dzhokhar Dudayev is alive.

[Correspondent] Then, where do reports on Dudayev's death come from and what is the aim of these reports?

[Korchynskyy] UNA-UNSD [Ukrainian National Assembly - Ukrainian National Self-Defense] has access to information that the Russian side knew about the regular meetings held by the prosecutor of the oppositional authorities of Chechnya and the leadership of the republic, which, of course, were attended by Dzhokhar Dudayev. A missile attack was made precisely on the building of the prosecutor's office, resulting in the death of 10 people. However, Dudayev was not present at that meeting and, therefore, remained alive.

Information to the effect that Shamil Basayev allegedly appeared on independent Chechen TV to report Dudayev's death is a blatant [words indistinct]. No such reports were made on Chechen television.

[Correspondent] Do you believe that the Russian side is allegedly interested in circulating reports on Dudayev's death?

[Korchynskyy] We are now witnessing a series of political actions in Russia that are aimed at finding a substitute for Dudayev at peace negotiations with Russian President Boris Yeltsin. The forces in Chechnya that were in opposition earlier and that are now actively cooperating with the federal authorities are also interested in this. It is worth emphasizing that one of such actions is the recent attempt to involve the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Kiev Patriarchate (UOC-KP), in the negotiations between the Russian Federation and Chechnya, which will now be represented by traitors who went over to the Russian side, in the capacity of a mediator. This attempt has failed.

[Correspondent] But you know that Patriarch Filaret of Kiev and All Ukraine-Rus announced his readiness to take part in the Russian-Chechen peace talks, in the capacity of a mediator.

[Korchynskyy] I talked today with Patriarch Filaret of Kiev and All Ukraine-Rus and he told me that he recognized Dudayev as the sole legitimate representative of Chechnya, and any participation of the Patriarch in the talks could be possible only with Dudayev's personal consent. After the Chechen president had been reported dead, the Patriarch refused to take part in the talks until the situation was cleared up.

[Correspondent] Could you comment on the allegations, repeatedly made by the Ukrainian and Russian press, that Dzhokhar Dudayev, who was proclaimed a state criminal, had been alive until recently only because the Russian authorities were interested in him?

[Korchynskyy] In reality, the Russian authorities have always been interested in Dudayev's death. He is alive only thanks to his reinforced personal guard, the discipline of the Chechen military subunits, and

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lack of coordination within the federal troops. Basayev, Raduyev, Maskhadov, and others are also alive thanks to this.

[Correspondent] Are you saying this as a leader of a political organization that is directly engaged in military operations in Chechnya?

[Korchynskyy] We have regular contacts with representatives of the Dudayev-led Chechen leadership. We are carrying out propaganda and political activities in Ukraine and in the Caucasus in support of the legitimate Dudayev-led Chechen government. I have access to information that the second assault on Groznyy will be carried out in May. As regards military operations... [ellipses as received] Since the adoption of Article 187 of Ukraine's Criminal Code I have had difficulty answering this kind of questions... [ellipses as received] However, a certain number of our men are always present in Chechnya. For example, a number of UNA-UNSD members are now engaged in agricultural work there.

[Correspondent] In the light of these statements, could you answer a question on whether UNA-UNSD is now a real force, an organization with a great number of well trained members, or just a myth?

[Korchynskyy] If we were powerful enough, we would have been exercising power now. These are only plans so far, but I hope that we will come to power within the next few years.

National Affairs

Ukraine: Crimean Supreme Soviet Chairman Interviewed

WS0305112496 Kiev ZERKALO NEDELI in Russian 27 Apr-6 May 96 pp 1, 6

[Interview with Crimean Supreme Soviet Chairman Yevhen Volodymyrovych Suprunyuk by Volodymyr Prytula and Pavel Yanin; place and date not given: "Suspiciousness and Distrust Are Not the Surest Path"]

[FBIS Translated Text] **Crimean Supreme Soviet Chairman Yevhen Volodymyrovych Suprunyuk is now in a difficult situation. First of all, he is quite a young politician who became the top man in the Crimean Autonomous Republic when he had not even reached the age of 40. Second, a Ukrainian Interior Ministry colonel must play according to someone else's rules. His shifts from full and adamant support of Kiev's activities to sharp and sometimes aggressive — when he repeated Meshkov's arguments — criticism of the Ukrainian leadership could be explained to some extent by his lack of political experience. On the other hand, one must remember that Yevhen Suprunyuk is the chairman of the Crimean Supreme Soviet, a considerable portion of whose deputies would be delighted to write the word "Ukraine" in lower case. Despite the increased influence of the Party of Economic Revival of Crimea in the local legislature, deputies — as well as their sentiments — remained the same as one or two years ago, although Yevhen Suprunyuk himself does not agree with this. Considering this fact, his answers to ZERKALO NEDELI's questions should probably be considered not so much as Yevhen Volodymyrovych's personal position, but as the reflection of the views of the deputies' majority in the Crimean Supreme Soviet, which he heads.**

[ZERKALO NEDELI] Yevhen Volodymyrovych, how do you assess the Ukrainian Supreme Council's recent decision on the Crimean draft constitution?

[Suprunyuk] Considering the fact that the former Crimean Constitution of 25 September 1992 guaranteed wider powers [to Crimea], the Ukrainian legislature's decision on our draft constitution triggered no festive euphoria. As you know, our draft constitution was approved only partially: 20 clauses out of 136 were not adopted. Of course, it is possible to say that a principal decision was adopted that the Crimean Republic will have its own constitution, not a charter. But all developments connected with the approval of the Crimean draft constitution prove that the position of the supporters of abolishing the autonomy and of depriving it of power is quite strong. After the Crimean legislature adopted its draft constitution on 1 November 1995, the process of coordinating and consulting its tenets extended to five months.

After the Ukrainian Supreme Council adopted its decision on 3 April 1996, the same process of delay was observed. Only on 19 April did the Ukrainian Supreme Council sign a decree according to which it became necessary to coordinate the unapproved clauses. In fact, this implies that we have not been given time for this work. The Ukrainian president has not yet signed our draft constitution. On 11 April, the Crimean legislature sent to Kiev a resolution in which it asked to specify the membership of the Ukrainian Supreme Council's commission for completing the work on our draft constitution. Recently, I again signed this address in the state's language. Perhaps they do not understand us in Kiev. Statements by politicians of various trends, for example, by Rukh Chairman Chornovil; by Ukrainian National Assembly Chairman Vitovych; by Stretovych, chairman of the Ukrainian Supreme Council's Commission for Legal Policy, Court, and Legal Reform; and by Rukh leader Lavrynovych do not give us any hope to "put back" such concepts as the "Crimean Republic" or the "Crimean Constitution" in the Ukrainian draft con-

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stitution, but we believe in the wisdom of the Ukrainian Supreme Council's majority.

[ZERKALO NEDELI] Yevhen Volodymyrovych, perhaps my next question will be very difficult for you, as well as for the majority of Crimean politicians: Is Crimea ready today for that level of independence which is envisaged in its draft constitution, adopted by the Crimean Supreme Soviet on 1 November last year? The five-year history of the Crimean autonomy shows that when Crimean leaders had wide powers they spent their time and efforts on the struggle against Kiev and against the Crimean president, as well as on internal squabbles in the Crimean legislature....

[Suprunyuk] The five-year history of the Crimean autonomy shows quite well that our region is not only ready for independence, but has already taken advantage of its independence at an introductory stage. As any historic process, the modest five-year history of the autonomy also has its stages. The first stage was the reestablishment of the Crimean Autonomous Republic of the Soviet Union as a subject of the Union agreement, the approval of its first Constitution, the preparation and the introduction into force of the Ukrainian Law "On the Division of Powers Between the Bodies of Ukrainian State Power and of the Crimean Republic," as well as Ukrainian President L. Kuchma's Edict "On the System of Open Economy on Crimean Territory." These facts and many others proved that the foundation has been created on which further independence could be built at an autonomous level.

I agree that in this five-year history there was also another stage, full of populist decisions and slogans, but it was a short period of trials and mistakes. But to build mutual relations between the center and the region only on the basis of eternal suspiciousness and distrust is perhaps not the surest path in politics. Anyway, from the summer of 1995, the Crimean Supreme Soviet has been doing everything to reestablish normal and businesslike relations with the Ukrainian leadership.

[ZERKALO NEDELI] It is a known fact that it is very difficult to establish mutual trust. Specific efforts and time are needed for this. The trust of politicians is also needed after an entire system of actions to destroy this trust was established. Has the Crimean legislature done all to reestablish the trust of our top state leaders in it, and has enough time for this passed?

[Suprunyuk] Perhaps the period of modern history through which we are currently passing can be characterized as a period of a crisis in trust. This crisis is seen in relations between nations, between states, and between individuals. But I think that — given a specific situation in mutual relations between Kiev and Simferopol — it is impossible to formulate an issue in favor of only Crimea and its leadership. Even in the period which, according to your definition, was characterized by an entire system of actions to destroy our mutual trust, the Crimean side did not leave the legal environment of Ukraine. As regards Crimean residents, their highest degree of trust was their participation in the Ukrainian presidential elections. I will remind you that the highest percentage of citizens who participated in presidential elections and voted for Kuchma was precisely in Crimea. The Ukrainian Supreme Council elections also have not been ignored by us. Given all the difficulties, mutual relations with the Ukrainian legislature were and are being built on the understanding of the supremacy of the state's highest representative body. The recent period is characterized by the striving of the Crimean legislature to convince both the Ukrainian legislature and Ukraine's top leadership of its readiness to cooperate closely and constructively.

We, however, have the right to ask a question: Are the Presidential Administration, the Cabinet of Ministers, and the Ukrainian legislature doing everything to strengthen the atmosphere of trust? There are so many relevant examples [of strengthening trust] that one should concentrate on the opposite cases — when commitments to not adopt unilateral decisions on staff issues and to not redistribute Crimean property were violated. We understand that the state has great financial problems. But what about its promises to finance military settlements on Crimean territory which are currently being made available [to us] by the Russian Black Sea Fleet, or to render assistance to Crimean rayons which suffered from natural calamities? I cannot but mention an unwise — in my opinion — decision to finance from the Crimean budget the 1996 program for the return and settlement of deported people. We cannot ensure even the minimum means which we must allocate for these purposes. What trust in the state can there be when dozens and hundreds of thousands of people have been left to the mercy of fate? If the Crimean legislature is severely criticizing the state's course, it does so only because it prefers the trust of ordinary voters to the favor of certain politicians.

The Crimean legislature is not alone in its view that certain Ukrainian political leaders and their entourage should be blamed for the instability and tension in Crimea. By the way, your newspaper has repeatedly published the opinions of well-known Ukrainian politicians — including those from the president's entourage — to the effect that numerous problems regarding the imbalance of trust between Simferopol and Kiev should be blamed on the central power. One should consider

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these opinions, but not show one's weakness by publishing statements of ideologically blind lawyers.

[ZERKALO NEDELI] Certain politicians assessed appeals (regarding the "colonial" status of Crimea) adopted by the Crimean Supreme Soviet — during your absence — as aimed against the signing of a wide scale Ukrainian-Russian agreement on friendship, and at the disruption [sryv] of the Russian president's visit to Kiev. Is there any reason for such statements, and do they bolster the strengthening of trust between Simferopol and Kiev, as well as between Kiev and Moscow?

[Suprunyuk] It is doubtful whether one should take out only one phrase from the text of the Crimean Supreme Soviet's appeals to the Ukrainian and Russian presidents, as well as to other entities. First of all, as in any other parliament, there are various viewpoints in the Crimean legislature. Second, these appeals concerned a wide spectrum of mutual relations between Crimea and Kiev, many of which have been unsolveable over several years. Third, should one exaggerate the role of these appeals in the disruption of Boris Yeltsin's visit to Ukraine? I think that the reasons for the failure to sign a wide scale Russian-Ukrainian agreement are much wider and deeper than the proposals presented in our appeals to the Russian and Ukrainian presidents. I would like to stress that the ignoring of Crimea's opinion on both the division of the Black Sea Fleet and the status of Sevastopol by both Russia and Ukraine has become a heavy burden primarily for Crimean residents. When Crimean representatives — either the head of the legislature or of the government — ceased to be invited to attend the meetings of both presidents, obviously the situation in Crimea became worse. We think that the experience of the Mukhalatka, Zavydovo, and Massandra meetings — where Crimea was represented by its Supreme Soviet chairman — must be studied and used at a new stage of Ukrainian-Russian relations.

The final issue: The Crimean Supreme Soviet is blamed for "washing its dirty linen in public" by appealing to international organizations — to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and to the Council of Europe. Where should we appeal if the Ukrainian leadership simply did not respond to our appeals. The Constitutional Court, which could react to our appeals, will likely not be set up very soon in Ukraine.

[ZERKALO NEDELI] What is the principal difference between a charter and a constitution of the autonomous republic? Why does Crimea need a constitution?

[Suprunyuk] The entire case of our constitution has been developing almost as in an old anecdote which ends with the words: "Five years have passed...." Exactly so! Let us recall: At the time, the Crimean legislature was instructed to develop a new version of its constitution, and this was done in 1992. Two years passed and the Constitution was abolished for the second time. The Ukrainian Supreme Council again instructed the Crimean legislature to draft and to adopt a new draft constitution, and this was done on 1 November 1995. During this period, the scope of our powers was so reduced that it resembled relations between a secondary rayon and a center in a sovereign state. It is possible to say with all certainty that there is an iron logic in the seemingly inconsistent position of Kiev. In addition, many lawyers in the legislature and in the Presidential Administration do not conceal their wish to reduce the autonomy's rights to the utmost degree and to delay the process of defining the legal status of Crimea.

I will not go into debates with the justice minister and with his colleagues, but I think that the proposed "statute" — as a document having the value of a law — is nothing but a wish to ensure an entirely unitary state. What about the will of Crimean residents expressed on 20 January 1991, and what about the subsequent history of Crimea?

[ZERKALO NEDELI] How realistic is the consensus between the Crimean Supreme Soviet and the Ukrainian Supreme Council regarding the unapproved clauses of the Crimean constitution? Viewpoints on these clauses in Kiev and Simferopol are sometimes absolutely opposite.

[Suprunyuk] I believe that this is the most difficult question. But after five months, during which Ukrainian and Crimean deputies worked jointly, one can hope that the number of deputies (210) in the Ukrainian legislature who voted for our constitution will increase. It is high time to understand that one should not be pushed by force into a democratic state, which is currently being built in Ukraine, and that Crimea is striving to achieve only one thing: Its statute in the legal environment of Ukraine must be defined in a civilized way. I must admit that we do not expect any economic "miracle" in Ukraine in the immediate future; we only want one thing — give us the power to enable us to independently and legally resolve the financial problems of every Crimean resident. We do not hope that we will have the understanding and the support of politicians of the national-radical trend who are viewing Crimean problems in light of only a single tenet: Unified [sobornyy] Crimea cannot be autonomous. We hope that we will be understood by those who believe in the slogan: Strong regions imply a strong center.

[ZERKALO NEDELI] One of the arguments against the approval of the Crimean draft constitution is the tenet that the attitude toward a new version of our constitution

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is ambiguous in Crimea itself. In particular, recently the Presidium of the Crimean Tatars' Maijlis (I think that it is very difficult to argue that the Maijlis truly represents the interests of Crimean Tatars) issued a statement which said that the present version of the Crimean constitution was adopted without the participation of Crimean Tatars. In addition, the Crimean constitution was adopted despite their extreme protest — e.g. the hunger strike by the Kurultay faction of deputies in November 1995 — hence, it cannot be regarded by Crimean Tatars as a legal document. How serious is your attitude toward this argument, and will it not lead, in essence, to an exacerbation of the political situation in Crimea?

[Suprunyuk] Of course, there are internal disagreements in the Crimean legislature which have been triggered by many reasons and by current processes in our society. I would like to emphasize that the Kurultay faction participated in voting on many clauses of the draft constitution, which was adopted on 1 November 1995. As is known, the portion of the Crimean draft constitution which was approved by the Ukrainian legislature contains a norm according to which Crimean Tatars can have representation in the legislative body. Whether the Kurultay faction will meet us halfway in the emerging constitutional disagreements between Kiev and Crimea will depend to a greater extent on the resolution of economic and financial problems.

I will provide only one example: To settle the people who have already returned to Crimea, to provide them with jobs, to build new schools, hospitals, roads, and so on, at least $2.5 billion are needed. The Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers, however, can allocate only $105 million until the year 2000. This is the primary reason for the exacerbation of the political situation in Crimea. Undoubtedly, disagreements on numerous tenets of the Crimean constitution will continue to emerge. But the absence of unity or debates over the perfection or imperfection of the Crimean constitution will hardly accelerate the building of houses or of hospitals for Crimean Tatars.

In my opinion, my primary task is to make all Crimean residents realize the importance of the existence of their constitution — on the basis of which it is possible to integrate the people of all nationalities who are returning from places of their deportation. I believe that the Maijlis will also come to understand the general values of Crimea. At a recent session of the Crimean Supreme Soviet's, preliminary discussions were held on the draft law "On the Restoration of Rights of Crimean Tatars, Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks, and Germans Who Were Deported From Crimea in 1941 and 1944." These discussions have shown various approaches toward this problem, but they also have proved that this law is critical for Crimea. If there is no Crimean constitution, would it be possible to develop such processes legally? I think that the Maijlis's position will change — from categoric demands regarding the understanding of Crimean general values to constructive proposals — when mechanisms for the integration of Crimean Tatars into Crimean society are specified. During the last session, representatives of all political trends declared: "We are doomed to live together." I believe that the understanding of this point will help us avoid serious political collisions both today and tomorrow.

[ZERKALO NEDELI] Are there forces in the Crimean legislature which have an interest in the exacerbation of the political situation in Crimea on the eve of the peninsula's vacation season?

[Suprunyuk] I think that it is unambiguously understood in the Crimean legislature that revenues for the budget depend a lot on the work of the sector which ensures vacations and rest in our sanatoria. The two past vacation seasons have been frustrated, but obviously not through the fault of Crimean residents. If there are forces which have an interest in the exacerbation of the political situation in Crimea on the eve of the vacation season, they are not in Crimea. One can only guess who profits from the fact that people do not go to Crimea. But the Crimean Supreme Soviet and the Crimean Government are placing their specific hopes on the summer period and are trying to the best of their abilities to avoid the situation of past years. Crimean resorts already now are ready to receive vacationers.

[ZERKALO NEDELI] Crimean communists are currently collecting signatures to support the demands on holding an all-Crimean referendum on the dissolution of the Crimean Supreme Soviet and of its chairman. What is your attitude toward such activities? If they collect enough signatures, will the Crimean legislature hold a referendum? To what extent are the deputies ready to place their fate in voters' hands?

[Suprunyuk] If this is indeed taking place, Crimean communists are illegally collecting signatures to support the demands to hold an all-Crimean referendum on the dissolution of the Crimean Supreme Soviet. I know that the Crimean Central Election Committee has not issued any lists for collecting signatures. The constitution of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea is only at the stage of approval, and only it can specify the form of holding a referendum on the dissolution of the Supreme Soviet. Therefore, if such signatures are being collected, they are not legal.

The second issue: The Presidium of the Crimean Supreme Soviet, at the time, had assessed the Crimean

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Communist Party's statement regarding the collection of signatures for a referendum as a populist one which is aimed at the destabilization of the situation in Crimea.

The last issue: When I met with representatives of Ukrainian Supreme Council's communist and socialist factions who supported our draft constitution, I quite precisely realized that the moves by Crimean communists are assessed by their party colleagues as local activities. Behind all their activities is the ordinary wish of the leaders of Crimean communists to come to power. But I think that this measure will lead to nothing but a crisis of power and will result in a failure to exert control over Crimean regions.

[Endnote] One may add that one of the primary qualities of Yevhen Volodymyrovych Suprunyuk is his ability to learn and to listen. Precisely due to this, he has a strong team of advisers comprising well-known people in Crimea — V. Shevyov, head of the Party of Economic Revival of Crimea; A. Formanchuk, P. Lomakin [not further identified], and so on. The Supreme Soviet chairman also considers the opinions of journalists. Another of Suprunyuk's qualities — and what is important, a quality of his entourage — is a wish to look for compromises. This quality outweighs even his lack of political experience.

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Belarus

Belarus: Syanko Holds News Conference on Foreign Affairs

WS0305083096 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0740 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Syanko held a regular briefing on May 2. In his opinion, the most important event in recent days was the ratification of the treaties on friendship and cooperation with Ukraine and Lithuania, which gave a legal basis for further development of relations with these neighboring states. A summit of CIS heads of states is to be held in Moscow, during which the presidents of Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, who signed a quadripartite integration agreement will have a special meeting for negotiations. Incidentally, the Belarusian parliament is about to ratify this agreement as well as the Russian-Belarusian Treaty on the formation of a community.

A review conference on the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) is to be held in mid-May in Vienna, Mr. Syanko said. He also pointed out that according to information received from Belarusian Defense Ministry, the fulfillment of the Belarusian commitments under the CFE treaty is near successful completion. A meeting of the Central European Initiative member-states' representatives will also take place in Vienna from May 31 to July 1. A preliminary meeting of the government heads and foreign ministers of these states was held in Warsaw about six months ago. The Belarusian foreign minister stressed that Belarus is interested in cooperation with this international organization to no smaller degree than, for example, with the Council of Europe or with the EU.

A NATO session at the level of foreign ministers is to be held in Berlin from July 1-2. The minister informed reporters that a visit by the Slovak prime minister to Minsk and a trip by the Belarusian Prime Minister Mikhail Chyhir to Pakistan would take place in the near future. In addition, Mr. Syanko plans to visit Latvia.

Belarus: Lukashenka Meets With Defense Ministry Leaders

WS0305082896 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 0300 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka participated in a meeting of the Belarusian Defense Ministry leadership; he also visited the Military Academy and the State University of Information, Radio and Electronics. According to the presidential press service, during Lukashenka's meeting with the Defense Ministry leadership and with the Armed Forces command, a range of issues related to the implementation of military reform, strengthening of combat readiness of troops, preparation of military staff, development of military science, and to the resolution of issues pertaining to the social sector of the Army were discussed. Alyaksandr Lukashenka paid special attention to the prospects for military construction and to the role of military science in this process. The president highly assessed scientific and technical projects developed by the joint efforts of military scientists and researchers from the State University of Information, Radio and Electronics. Some of these projects are unique and have no analogues in the world.

Alyaksandr Lukashenka has issued an instruction to provide the state targeted financing of a number of projects.

Belarus: Lukashenka Rejects Claims of 'Police State'

MS0205112796 London FINANCIAL TIMES in English 2 May 96 p 2

[Report by Chrystia Freeland incorporating an interview with Belarus President Aleksandr Lukashenka: "Collective Farmer With Tsarist Ambitions"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Last month, Belarusian President Aleksandre Lukashenka was the Kremlin's most honoured guest, receiving kisses from the Russian president and a blessing from the Orthodox Patriarch after signing a union treaty with Russia.

But back home in Minsk, the Belarusian capital, Mr Lukashenka has been having a tougher time, as western observers and local activists have stepped up their accusations that he is turning the Slavic state of 10 million people into an authoritarian regime harking back to the Soviet Union.

At a time when many other former Soviet cities are swiftly shedding their communist skins, in its outward appearance Minsk has become a throwback to the *ancien regime*. A towering statue of Lenin dominates the city's central square and nearby the republic's Soviet-era red flag, which has been restored as the nation's official symbol, flutters proudly. Belarusian politicians and the western sypathisers are ever more troubled by signs that Mr Lukashenka is reclaiming the substance, as well as the symbols of an earlier era.

Last week his security forces brutally broke up a demonstration by more than 40,000 protesters. At least 200 people, some of them uninvolved bystanders, swept up in a police dragnet, were arrested and held incommunicado for three days.

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Some activists could face criminal charges and lengthy prison sentences. Leading activists opposed to Mr Lukashenka have had their homes searched and been arrested by police. A few others have gone into hiding. The crackdown, and Mr Lukashenka's gradual erosion of the independence of the judiciary, the media, parliament and even private business, have led some observers to accuse him of building "a police state" which is reminiscent of a "Latin American style junta".

Surrounded by a bevy of beefy but nervous aides in his official residence, Mr Lukashenka is unrepentant. I. an interview with the Financial limes, the president described last week's demonstration, which was a protest against his government and his hopes of forming a full political and economic union with Russia, as "a meeting of the fascist opposition". The demonstrators, he says, were "drunk and stoned", and he claims the journalists who were beaten at the rally were victims of the demonstrators and not of his security forces.

The demonstration was one of four mass opposition rallies held over the past month — including one yesterday. "Let me assure you that if we had wanted a fight there would have been a real one," he said. "In democratic countries... they would just hit such people over the head."

Mr Lukashenka, aged 40 and a former collective farm manager, is not embarrassed by domestic accusations — backed by a recent U.S. report on Belarus which accused him of muzzling the media. He dismisses these charges, arguing the opposition press is mentally unbalanced.

The Belarusian opposition chafes at Mr Lukashenka's cavalier disregard for the civil liberties of his compatriots, but what pains them most is the argument which is the president's trump-card: his tremendous public popularity among the silent majority despite the recent demonstrations.

"With such extraordinarily high popularity, why would I need to run the country with dictatorial methods?" Mr Lukashenka, who is the strongest advocate of full political union between the two Slav states, is said to cherish hopes of one day being the leader of a greater Russia-Belurus.

Mr Lukashenka does not openly admit to such ambitions. But he is confident that "80 per cent" of Russians are his supporters. He says: "For me the will of the Slavic peoples is a law. If their will is to send me far beyond the borders of our state I will go."

Belarus: Foreign Minister 'Regrets' Journalists' Treatment in Minsk

LD0205182996 Moscow NTV in Russian 1500 GMT 2 May 96

[From the "Segodnya" news program by announcer Tatyana Mitkova]

[FBIS Translated Text] Even though it was holiday today, Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Syanko held a news conference in which he voiced his regrets and perplexity over the incident during the May Day demonstrations in Minsk yesterday involving film crews from NTV Television and Russia TV channel. May I remind you that video cassettes were taken away from our correspondents, an attempt was made to take away their video camera, and the cameraman had to have medical treatment for blows he received.

Attempts were made to drag the Russia TV channel correspondents out of their car and to take away their video cassettes.

According to the POSTFACTUM, on Belarus Television news yesterday the incident was described as a provocation by unknown criminals.

Belarus: Parties Warn of 'Dictatorial,' 'Totalitarian Regime'

WS0205132996 Minsk BELAPAN in English 1145 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Minsk, 1 May — A number of Belarusian public organisations and political parties have subscribed to a statement made in view of the April 26 events in Minsk. The statement tells about the establishment of a dictatorial and totalitarian regime in Belarus. "The cynicism of the authorities and the infringement of human rights forces us to appeal to Belarusian people and all democratic organisations for unity in the struggle for their rights and their country, and against the naked encroachment on democracy in the centre of Europe," the statement reads. Its authors express hope for understanding and support from the countries in which democracy and law have gained strength. The statement was signed by the leaders of the Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada [Assembly], the Belarusian Popular Front, the Belarusian Peasant Party, the Belarusian National Party, the Belarusian Association of Military Servicemen, the National Elector Club, the Party of Common Sense among others.

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Belarus: Commentator Views Violent Rallies, Opposition Politicians

WS0205135096 Minsk BTK Television Network in Belarusian 1800 GMT 1 May 96

[Commentary by Ihar Hryshan, political observer of the ATN television news agency — in Russian]

[FBIS Translated Text] Good evening! You must agree that this evening is actually good, and so is the day 1 May — the festivity of spring and labor. I remember that not long ago some skeptics would have said with bitter irony that we used to have peace and labor, and now we have only May Day. Messrs., let me disagree with you. I am convinced that we will peacefully and sincerely mark the bright May holiday on more than one occasion in our dear Belarus.

Nevertheless, on the eve of 1 May there were fears in the hearts of many of us. They were connected with the mass riots which occurred in Minsk on 26 April, and which were provoked by certain politickers. For them — for the likes of Paznyak, Shushkevich, Znavets, Antonchyk, and other so-called fighters for the people's happiness — there is nothing sacred. They finally revealed their true face which had previously been covered under the mask of noble intellect. It became clear that what is important for them is not the people's suffering, but, excuse me, their selfish personal interests. I feel very sorry for those who do not yet understand the obvious.

It should not be concealed, however, that also during today's festivities in Independence Square, certain activists from the ranks of the most ambitious opposition politicians tried to cast a shadow on the bright day, as the saying goes. For example, they demanded punishing the representatives of power structures who apparently gave orders to beat up people during the 26 April procession.

In turn, I would like to appeal to the mothers and fathers of our young people, who are sometimes too hot-blooded and who often do not understand what they do and into whose hands they play.

Esteemed viewers, you should rather thank the Belarusian police for their correctness and restraint. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of our citizens understand perfectly well that we will not extricate ourselves from our difficulties by shouting. Yes, it currently is indeed hard. Yes, current life is still far from being cloudless. I am convinced, however, that we will endure and overcome the hard times by extending our strong hands of Belarusian workers to one another at difficult moments. I am convinced that one day Belarus will learn what is true and what is false. [video shows footage of the 26 April clashes between the opposition and police and shots of 1 May rallies and marches in Minsk].

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Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan: Tokayev on Relations With Russia, China

964F2024A Almaty KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 27 Apr 96 p 2

[Interview with Kasymzhomart Tokayev, minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, by Elmira Pashina; place and date not given: "There Is a Positive Side to Leaders' Solitariness—Total Protection Against Outside Influence"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Begin box]

His Card

Forty-three years of age. Graduated from the Moscow State International Relations Institute (1975) and the Diplomatic Academy (1992). As of 1975, in the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs system. In the period 1975-1979, officer of the Embassy of the USSR in Singapore. As of April 1979, attache and third secretary of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As of August 1983, intern at the Beijing Chinese Language Institute. As of July 1984, second secretary of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A year later, second secretary and first secretary of the embassy of the USSR in China.

In 1992 appointed deputy minister of foreign affairs, and in October 1994, minister of foreign affairs, of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Speaks Chinese, English, and French. [end box]

[Pashina] Kasymzhomart Kemelevich, first, thank you for the present, which will certainly adorn our reception area, second, some "awkward" questions will, I believe, be compensated by a cup of tea. You have no objections?

[Tokayev] I agree.

[Pashina] Since we have spoken of compensation, let's begin with it.

A current opinion is that the certain taboo on diplomats' loquacity is compensated by works of literature. It is frequently from books by representatives of the diplomatic corps that the reader learns spicy details concerning this statesman or the other. What is this: belated truth or a kind of vengeance for years of silence? Does this not indicate that the diplomat, while he is a diplomat, is a totally dependent individual?

[Tokayev] I am preparing for publication a large work provisionally entitled "Four Years of Foreign Policy," which, together with a methodological section, is spiced with reminiscences about the important and interesting events in which I participated directly.

It all depends on who is writing about whom. On their sense of responsibility and probity.

Mao Zedong's former physician published in the United States a book which portrays the "great helmsman" as some woman-chasing monster. But people who knew him well spoke of him as being an exceptionally solitary individual. In my view, only such a person could have compared himself to a solitary monk raving with a torn umbrella against the rain.

This could apply to Stalin as well. My former boss, Oleg Aleksandrovich Troyanovskiy—an outstanding personality and top diplomat who was for eight years ambassador in Japan, 10, at the United Nations, and four, in China—said that, as Stalin's interpreter, he spent a week with him in Crimea. And it all began with the words: "Young man, you are probably tired. Stay here, stay at the dacha." Billiards, light Georgian wine, infrequent conversations about nothing much—and, aside from the cooks, neither retinue nor women.

Mao and Stalin were undoubtedly dictators. But the solitariness which united them showed its positive side also—total protection against outside influence. The solitariness contributed to the adoption of the shock decisions.

Leaders of such a level determined their countries' foreign policy individually, as a rule. If we recall the subsequent history of Soviet diplomacy, we could cite many examples of ministers of foreign affairs making serious mistakes only because they had been made by the top leaders on account of their mentality.

I am convinced that a very big mistake was made in the late period of the rule of Nikita Khrushchev, namely, in 1964, when a treaty on the border with China could not be signed. Having invited the Soviet delegation to supper, the premier of the PRC State Council warned at that time with tears in his eyes: "You will see, this will lead to bloodshed."

Five years later—in 1969—blood was spilled on Damanskiy Island. Bloody conflicts with numerous casualties are on the conscience of willful leaders.

[Pashina] What should the leader—the top person in the state—be like for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to correspond to its purpose in full?

[Tokayev] Smart and strong-willed. It is not now the done thing, seemingly, to genuflect before the president but, nonetheless, I have to say that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is lucky in that there is just such a person at the head of the state. This has predetermined a rational distribution of obligations and possibilities. Mutual efforts on the part of the president

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and ourselves have contributed to Kazakhstan having been able to clearly determine where it stands as regards priorities in foreign policy, having told the world of its commitment to a multivector policy and of its liberation from ideological prejudices. It hardly makes sense showering our head with ashes when speaking about foreign policy. A great deal has been done—this is acknowledged by all foreign diplomats. International policy is of tremendous significance for the formation of an independent state. And under no circumstances can foreign and domestic policy be counterposed. These are interrelated categories. If we recall the history of the "new thinking," we may satisfy ourselves that foreign policy can send such powerful impulses to domestic policy that a question of a country's very existence comes to the surface.

[Pashina] I have the impression at times that the initiatives emanating from Russia are taken as a given reality by our country.

[Tokayev] An incorrect notion. When we obtained from Russia the "integration" treaty, which signified that the states that signed it, while continuing to be members of the United Nations, would form a confederation of states, the president did not agree with the issue being framed in this way. N.A. Nazarbayev personally asked the Russian president to assign this matter to Minister of Foreign Affairs Yevgeniy Primakov directly. As a result, the treaty no longer makes any mention of a confederation but speaks of an intensification of integration in the economic and humanitarian spheres.

Let us not try and guess what turn history will take in the future. The world is developing in free form, and it is possible that a unification trend will come to replace separatism 50 or 100 years on. But it is clearly premature to be speaking of this under the present realities. For it is abnormal, you will agree, when, following the conclusion of a treaty, a demonstration 40,000 strong takes to the streets of one city. This means that the politicians' intentions are not serving the people's interests.

[Pashina] The processes occurring in Russia are echoed in Kazakhstan in one way or another. What, in your view, dictated the change in the leadership of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

[Tokayev] The viewpoints of different and, at times, polar-opposite forces in Russia had clashed over the problem of the expansion of NATO. This is a graphic example of the relationship of foreign and domestic policy. Quite specific complaints were heard about Mr. Kozyrev—"Atlantism," that is, an undue emphasis on relations with the United States and the West as a whole, a disregard for Russia's interests in the countries of the CIS, and surrender of positions in respect to the former Yugoslavia and also in the process of a Near East settlement.

Yevgeniy Maksimovich Primakov, having worked for many years in the foreign policy sphere, although he had not held any office in the Foreign Ministry, sensitively latched onto what is most important for Russia. Not only in the plane of international politics, what is more, but also from the viewpoint of stabilization of the domestic situation. The first thing he did was to pay visits to CIS countries, which, of course, performed a positive role in the strengthening of relations.

In our conversation, this was on 29 March in Moscow, following the signing of the treaty of the four, he spoke plainly of his strict position in respect to an expansion of NATO. He believes also that Russia must restore its positions in the Near East and in Bosnia. The Americans have already become aware of his firmness, incidentally.

I would emphasize that Russia is for us the priority partner. And this is not political opportunism but an objective necessity.

[Pashina] And Kazakhstan has its own position on the expansion of NATO?

[Tokayev] We should remember that without consideration of Russia's interests the expansion of NATO would lead to a destabilization of the situation throughout Europe.

But, on the other hand, it has to be seen that the process is assuming an inevitable nature and will intensify in the near future. The moment of deterrence was let slip, and it would be very undesirable for a new confrontation to arise over this problem. This is our position. I stated it to Yevgeniy Maksimovich, and it seemed to me that he was satisfied.

[Pashina] The last time the Russian president visited Kazakhstan was at the start of 1990, I believe. What is the occasion for his expected visit to Almaty today, 27 April?

[Tokayev] The heads of five states: Russia, Kazakhstan, China, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, met in Shanghai yesterday. The countries, which have a common border, signed a unique document—an agreement on confidence-building measures along the border. From Shanghai, in accordance with a prior arrangement, Boris Nikolayevich will come to Kazakhstan for a few hours to sign important agreements, but between Kazakhstan and Russia on this occasion, a declaration on closer interaction in the sphere of the economy and policy included. It is possible that a statement on the status of the Caspian will be adopted.

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[Pashina] How do you conceive of partnership with Russia in a solution of, say, the Chechen question with Kazakhstan's membership of the Islamic Conference Organization?

[Tokayev] I will tell you frankly that we were in no hurry over membership, and there were reasons for this. It was necessary first and foremost to ascertain what kind of commitments ensue from membership for such complex problems as Karabakh, Chechnya, and Bosnia, where it is necessary to make common cause with the Muslim world, were on the agenda. I confess, we thought about the situation in Kazakhstan as a multidenominational state.

But further study of the issue showed that the Islamic Conference Organization is a very moderate organization which includes a wide spectrum of states—from Senegal and Mali to Saudi Arabia and Iran. The head of this organization, incidentally, is a representative of Niger, where the Muslim population does not exceed 40 percent. It is of considerable importance for us that it is registered as an entity of the United Nations and has good relations with the United States. Considering this political spectrum and also the economic attractiveness, we made up our minds. The point being that members of the Islamic Conference Organization have an opportunity to obtain interest-free loans via the Islamic Development Bank.

As far as Chechnya is concerned, the intensity surrounding this question has eased to a considerable extent thanks to the efforts of Russian diplomacy.

In addition, in a conversation with the top leader of Iran I succeeded in obtaining his consent on two main issues: The Yeltsin peace plan should be supported, and the Chechen problem must be settled only in the context of Russia's integrity. Only a madman, having yielded to temptation, could play on its integrity. The fragmentation of a powerful and great Chechnya would lead to chaos on a global scale.

Dudayev was obviously hoping that the entire Islamic world would become agitated and would render support. It did not happen. When it became a war of attrition, and not in favor of the Chechens, what is more, he should for the sake of his people have sat down at the negotiating table.

[Pashina] Yeltsin refused outright at that time. President of Tatarstan Shaymiyev was unable to find real representatives of Dudayev. So that left President N.A. Nazarbayev?

[Tokayev] In expressing his mediation offer Nursultan Abishevich proceeded from several factors, primarily from the understanding that both Chechnya itself and the rest of Russia need peace. Second, he could not remain uninvolved in response to the numerous appeals from the Chechen diaspora in Kazakhstan, and third, the innumerable appeals of public organizations and ordinary people from many countries of the Commonwealth served as a kind of credit of confidence in him as a strong politician. Negotiations with Dudayev will not now be held owing to the news of his death. But it should be remembered that it takes no great intellect to destroy peace but preserving it is a great science.

[Pashina] Let us talk about the great science. About an organization which has for 50 years served exclusively peace—the United Nations.

[Tokayev] The book, which I wrote at the suggestion of high-level UN officials, incidentally, is called "Fifty Years of the Service of Peace."

This is, truly, a universal organization which, well or badly, supports peace and embodies and reflects the interests of all states, large, medium-sized, or small. There is no alternative to the United Nations.

I have to say that Kazakhstan works quite actively in the United Nations. In 1994-1995 alone it coauthored more than 30 resolutions. The range of our interests also includes a lowering of the amount of the contribution, naturally. Joining the ranks of states of the so-called transit period, we were able to save $4 million by way of complex manipulation of the scale of contributions, and this figure will increase over time, what is more.

But we are constantly aware of the gravity of the problems of financial support of UN membership. On the last occasion Kazakhstan managed "to hop onto the train at the last minute," paying $2.5 million, and to thereby avoid the humiliating procedure of removal from the voting area. This is what happens. An issue is announced, and prior to the vote on it, the chairman intervenes and says: We request that such-and-such countries leave the hall on account of their arrears. The representatives of a number of CIS states experienced unpleasant moments.

[Pashina] Tell us, please, as a Sinologist, how proper it is today to frame the issue of Chinese expansion.

[Tokayev] Beijing flat-out rejects the charges of expansionism. I had a conversation with Baker on this topic not that long since. He believes that the "spread" of China in the future is to be expected, most likely, in the direction of Southeast Asia. It could be added to this that China is definitely mindful both of the lessons of history and of the fact that the culture of the nomads, about which Lev Gumilev wrote, and the culture of the Russians are closer to each other and remote from the culture of the descendants of the "yellow emperor."

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[Pashina] What constitutes a headache for the minister today?

[Tokayev] We need to get on with adopting a law on the diplomatic service, which would resolve many of our urgent problems. We are working on the creation of a higher diplomatic school. This project is now undergoing legal tests. The question of personnel has to be tackled, serious oversights were allowed to occur here back in the phase of formation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On the whole, Kazakhstan is preserving its positions in the world as a potentially powerful state. It is extremely important to reveal this potential for the good of the people. And then the voice of our state in the chorus of the world community will be heard more distinctly.

Kazakhstan: Government Considering PRC Oil Pipeline Project

LD3004145796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1339 GMT 30 Apr 96

[By Vladimir Akimov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Almaty, April 30 (Itar-Tass) — Kazakhstan is considering a project to lay an oil pipeline to link it with the Pacific coast of China.

Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Gizzatov told a press conference today that the need for the oil pipeline is prompted by prospects of Kazakhstan's oil sector and predictable changes in international oil markets at the start of the next century.

The launching of new oil fields in the Caspian Sea and other regions of Kazakhstan is to make the Central Asian republic one of leading oil states of the world in the nearest future, Gizzatov said.

Rapid economic growth of China, Japan and South East Asia states holds out a promise of their becoming the world's largest oil exporters within a decade or two.

Gizzatov said efforts should be invested now in making Kazakhstan, whose prospective revenues are largely dependent on oil, a rich state.

The tentative trans-Asia oil pipeline is to become the world's longest. The project is estimated to cost an equivalent of eight to 12 billion U.S. dollars.

The cost-effectiveness of the pipeline is in close scrutiny. Experts are in particular considering different routes of the pipeline, its optimal diametre, the number of pumping stations and other technical solutions.

The pipeline link with the Pacific coast is a matter of the future, Gizzatov said. Meanwhile, Kazakhstan's oil exports are related mostly to the project of setting up a Caspian pipeline consortium. An accord on it had been drawn up during the brief April 27 visit of Russian President Boris Yeltsin to Kazakhstan.

Available pipelines and a new pipeline trunk to be constructed within a few years are to enable Kazakhstan to transport annually 60 million tonnes of the oil to Russia's Black Sea coastal oil terminals.

Kazakhstan: Gas Supplies to Southern Regions Threatened With Cuts

LD0305090496 Almaty KARAVAN-BLITS in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Almaty — The Almatygaz joint stock company yesterday morning received a telemessage, saying that natural gas supplies from Uzbekistan to southern Kazakhstan, including Almaty will be cut off from 1400 on 29 April. (Incidentally, at the weekend, the pressure dropped from 3 to 0.4 kgs in our gas pipeline, and all industrial enterprises had to switch to liquefied gas and fuel oil as far as possible.)

The gas supplier, the Kazakhgaz state holding company, opted for this "tough" method of putting pressure on debtors in accordance with agreements signed earlier (Almatygaz owes about 900 million tenge for blue fuel it has used so far). Viktor Begin, the Kazakh deputy oil and gas minister, comments:

— This measure is completely justified and legal. He who does not pay does not get any gas. However, the heads of the Almatygaz joint stock company do not want to leave the southern capital without natural gas and are actively negotiating deferment of the debt and asking that the decision be dropped.

Kazakhstan: Supreme Council Discusses Export Controls on Weapons

LD0205190996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1633 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ALMATY, May 2 (Interfax) — The parliament in Kazakhstan has begun discussion of proposed legislation on export controls of weapons, military hardware and dual purpose products.

Unveiling the bill, Deputy Industry and Trade Minister Khairulla Ospanov [name as received] said the new law will create a legal framework for arms exports and contribute to the nonproliferation treaty and the country's other international commitments.

He said nuclear warheads have now been pulled out from Kazakhstan, but it still has military hardware, produces nuclear materials and dual purpose wars and has

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technologies to make them. "All of this binds the republics with international obligations on the prevention of the spread of mass destruction weapons making the question of arms export controls very important," Ospanov said.

The deputy minister said the U.S. Lugar Fund will grant a $1.2 million aid to Almaty to this end under the 1993 bilateral agreement but Kazakhstan needs 8-10 million tenge worth of budget expenditure to set up its own system of arms export controls ($1 equals 63 tenge).

Ospanov does not rule out the possibility of introducing a computerized system of arms controls in the first half of next year. He put at an annual $100 million the volume of military exports saying weapons exports make up a mere 0.3 percent of the total.

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan: Akayev Interviewed on State of Relations With Russia

964F2026A Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 20 Apr 96 pp 1, 3

[Interview with President of Kyrgyzstan Askar Akayev by Yevgeniy Denisenko; place and date not given: "Strategic Partnership"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Denisenko] Mr. President, the first official visit that you made following your recent reelection as head of Kyrgyzstan was to the Russian Federation....

[Akayev] And this was not fortuitous. Russia is for us of priority significance. Kyrgyz-Russian relations are assuming the nature of a strategic partnership. A package of documents encompassing a wide spectrum of bilateral cooperation in the sphere of policy, the economy, education, law, defense, and security was signed in the course of the recent visit.

The most important document is the Declaration of the Expansion and Intensification of Kyrgyz-Russian Cooperation, which records the level that our relationship has reached and affords prospects for its development. We attach particular significance, of course, to economic cooperation. We are for direct relations, production cooperation, the creation of financial and industrial groups, and the attraction of Russian capital to the republic. The question of the exchange of information and protection of the external borders is in the sphere of constant attention.

I would term as being second in terms of importance to Kyrgyzstan the question of cooperation in the sphere of education, which, unfortunately, is not at the proper level as yet. We are for the reconstitution of a common educational and scientific and technological space and hope for closer interaction.

[Denisenko] What is the status of Kyrgyz-Russian relations today?

[Akayev] Despite all the difficulties, they are very friendly. The collapse of economic relations between states of the Commonwealth has not influenced the mutual affections between Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Federation. Both parties aspire not only to preserve but also to multiply the good things that exist in our relations.

The Kyrgyz-Russian University, the only one in Central Asia, operates in Bishkek. It has become a highly prestigious educational institution. Some 192 joint ventures have been formed and are operating.

Let us hope that subsequently the political course of our countries will be geared to the continuation of radical economic reforms and the building of democratic law-based states capable of defending the interests and dignity of the individual. This will be a solid and firm foundation for mutual attraction.

[Denisenko] How do you evaluate the prospects of these relations?

[Akayev] We are loyal to the traditions of Kyrgyz-Russian friendship. On 15 March 1786 the Empress Catherine II received with observance of all the formalities of the highest court etiquette emissaries of the Kyrgyz ruler Atake who established friendship with Russia.

Relations between our countries will strengthen and develop on both a bilateral and multilateral basis. The results of the recent visit to the Russian Federation put us in an optimistic frame of mind.

[Denisenko] Mr. President, how might you explain the continuing outflow of Russian-speaking citizens from the republic?

[Akayev] The 1993-1994 period was the peak of the outflow. Many people perceived the disintegration of the USSR as the appearance of a mighty fissure between the former Union republics, which would separate them from one another forever, virtually. The severance of production relations signified the stoppage of industrial enterprises, at which Russian-speakers worked, in the main. Nationalism at the everyday level was stimulated in places, and the language problem was artificially raised. It seemed to many Russian-speakers, Slavs particularly, that they were beginning to lose their prospects. Some of them made the rash decision to leave for their historical homeland before it was too late.

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It was clear to me, as to other of my compatriots, for that matter, that this was a passing phenomenon caused by temporary difficulties and the national perception of the new realities, which did not fit within the concepts of homeland, patriotism, and national affiliation that had taken shape earlier. All this appeared absurd and irrational in many respects—the divided consciousness and the start of alienation could have done considerable damage both to our own interests and to the future of the CIS.

From the very first days I made every effort to halt the outflow of Russian-speakers and to preserve the basis of the development of our intellectual potential. The task of political stability and interethnic harmony and cooperation was made paramount. We created the Assembly of the Peoples of Kyrgyzstan, afforded each nationality the opportunity to freely develop its own culture, maintain contacts with the historical homeland, and engage in economic activity on a par with the indigenous nationality, and enshrined constitutionally rights, liberties, and obligations identical for all citizens of the republic. At my request the republic parliament adopted the decision to impart to Russian official status. After it has negotiated a procedural formality, this provision will be enshrined in the constitution.

There is much talk to the effect that Russian-speakers in Kyrgyzstan are being squeezed out of public service. Judge for yourself: Andrey Iordan is minister of industry and commerce, Aleksandr Moiseyev, minister of construction and architecture, Larisa Gutnichenko, minister of justice, and Yan Fisher, minister for CIS affairs. Last year the vast majority of residents of our capital cast their votes at the elections for the city's mayor for Boris Silayev. He is today, perhaps, the sole mayor of a capital of the CIS countries who is a representative of other than the indigenous nationality. We are rendering the Orthodox Church the utmost assistance. This year is the 125th anniversary of the Bishkek and Central Asian eparchies and the 50th anniversary of the Church of Christ's Resurrection. A new church is being built in the capital, and the Cathedral of the Resurrection will undergo reconstruction. We are inviting to the celebration in November the patriarch of Moscow and All Rus.

Even last year there was a "surplus balance" of Russian-speaking departures and returnees to Kyrgyzstan. And new people, who had not lived here earlier, are coming, what is more. We have signed with the Russian side an agreement on a simplified procedure of the adoption of citizenship and its relinquishment. The restoration of our economy and, accordingly, the place and role therein of Russian-speakers will contribute to the mass outflow soon ending altogether.

[Denisenko] Kyrgyzstan has scored pronounced successes in the economy. On what is the republic's economic stabilization based?

[Akayev] There is no doubt that we have achieved certain results. With the acquisition of independence our state, one of the first among the former Union republics, began economic transformations. In the estimation of the IMF, Kyrgyzstan occupies one of the leading places in terms of results of the reforms. In 1993, despite the foreign and domestic resistance, we introduced a national currency, which has become convertible. Investments allocated by leading countries and international organizations are coming into the republic.

Of course, the achievement of economic stability is inconceivable without the establishment in the republic of interethnic harmony and the organization of political, economic, cultural, and social ties to countries of the near and far abroad. An important step in this respect was Kyrgyzstan's accession to the Customs Union. The recent signing by the presidents of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan of the treaty on an intensification of economic, political, and humanitarian integration will serve as a powerful boost also.

[Denisenko] Askar Akayev, how did you react to the decision of the Russian Federation State Duma denouncing the Belovezhskaya Agreements?

[Akayev] After the elections to the State Duma, I conceded the possibility that the Belovezhskaya Agreements could become in this form or the other an object of the political campaign in connection with the presidential elections in Russia. The State Duma's decree was a propaganda step which could temporarily cause a considerable amount of noise, but which is worthless in the legal respect. I have faith in the people of Russia making the right choice and in the path of democracy being decisive for it.

[Denisenko] It is said among journalists that you often like to use lines of poetry. Is this true?

[Akayev] I confess that often when pondering some problem or the other or answering questions, I catch myself finding that lines of poetry that I once read suggest what I would like to say. Russian poetry is particularly close to me. It is, indeed, impossible not to love it.

Kyrgyzstan: Premier Attends Commission Meeting on Economic Crimes

LD3004140896 Bishkek Kyrgyz Radio First Program Network in Kyrgyz 0500 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A meeting of the Kyrgyz Government commission on economic crimes in the bank-

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ing, credit, and financial systems took place in Bishkek yesterday. Cases of the illegal allocation and use of credit resources by juridical and natural persons, joint-stock commercial banks of the republic, and [words indistinct]. Prosecutors have uncovered 36 cases of allocating credits in violation of banking legislation during 1995 and the first quarter of 1996. Criminal proceedings have been instituted in those cases. The total sum of illegally allocated credits was 27,978,000 soms, out of which only 5,305,000 soms were recovered. Criminal proceedings have been instituted in these cases against the heads of 17 joint-stock banks. Kyrgyz Prime Minister Apas Dzhumagulov, Internal Affairs Minister Omurbek Kutuyev, National Security Minister Anarbek Bakayev, and the directors of banks took part in the meeting.

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Armenia

Armenia: Russian Defense Minister Grachev, Delegation Arrive

LD0205120596 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1100 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Russian military delegation led by Defense Minister Pavel Grachev arrived in Yerevan today. The visit includes Grachev meeting Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Prime Minister Grant Bagratyan.

There will be a working conference of top personnel in the defence ministries of Russia and Armenia, following on from which 10 agreements are to be signed. It is thought that a plan for cooperation between the two countries' defense ministries in 1996 will also be confirmed. Pavel Grachev also plans to familiarize himself with several units of the Armenian armed forces, as well as the everyday living conditions for Russian units stationed in Armenia.

Armenia: President Meets Visiting Russian Defense Minister

NC0205185396 Yerevan NOYAN TAPAN in English 1329 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yerevan, May 2 (NOYAN TAPAN) — "Talks with President were quite successful. President clearly realizes the situation we have come to in our military relations", Russia's Defense Minister Pavel Grachev said Wednesday [2 May], after meeting President of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosyan. "I informed him on the documents we are going to consider and sign today as well as on prospects for further cooperation. As far as I could see, President is quite satisfied and I guess he is leaving for China in high spirits", Grachev said.

Grachev arrived in Armenia on Thursday. Russian top brass are scheduled to meet with Prime Minister Grant Bagratyan, after which Bagratyan and Grachev are to sign about ten documents.

Russia's Defense Minister will stay in Armenia for three days.

Armenia: President, Russia's Grachev Praise Military Cooperation

NC0205211696 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1900 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan today received Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev and his high-ranking military delegation which is on a working visit to Armenia.

President Levon Ter-Petrosyan highly assessed the Armenian-Russian relations in general and their military cooperation in particular. The president noted that in terms of integration, Armenian ranks first among the CIS countries in (?forging) military cooperation with Russia. At present, Armenia is actively participating in formulating the joint draft programs and operational cooperation, which will impart new content to these relations.

The Russian minister highly appraised the military cooperation between Armenia and Russia and assured that it will continue productively in the future as well.

Numerous matters relating to the military-technical cooperation between the countries were examined during the meeting.

After the meeting, the Armenian president held a private meeting with ministers Pavel Grachev and Vazgen Sargisyan.

Armenia: Agreements Signed With Visiting Russian Defense Minister

NC0205183996 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1700 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A joint consultative meeting of the leading personnel of the Armenian and Russian defense ministries took place today. I now present a report by our colleague Armen Vardanyan:

[Begin recording] [Vardanyan] Following the joint consultative meetings, the Armenian and Russian defense ministers signed 12 documents relating to the bilateral cooperation in the military sphere. After the signing ceremony, the defense ministers of the two countries, Vazgen Sargisyan and Pavel Grachev, held a news conference for the reporters. In view of the importance of the matter, we are presenting the defense ministers' statement made at the beginning of the news conference with minor abridgements. [passage omitted, statements by the two defense ministers in Russian] The ministers then replied to reporters' questions. [end recording]

Armenia: Russian Commander Says Border With Turkey Reliably Defended

NC0205205896 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1950 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Each of the documents to be signed marks a new phase in military cooperation between us and Armenia, said Lieutenant General Fedor Reut, commander of the Russian military unit in Transcaucasia, in a statement to ARMENPRES correspondent.

The preparation of the agreements on the scientific and technical aspects and the draft agreement concerning the

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coalition forces in the region are manifestations of the upswing in our close relations in the defense sphere.

In reply to a question on the recent intensification of provocative actions by Turkish forces on the CIS southern border, Fedor Reut underlined that this part of the CIS is reliably defended and everything will be done to prevent such incidents on the territory of the state bordering on Armenia.

Armenia: Russian, Armenian Church Leaders Meet, Comment

NC0205184396 Yerevan NOYAN TAPAN in English 1329 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yerevan, May 2 (NOYAN TAPAN) — "Current world situation demands especial responsibility of all Christians", Patriarch of Moscow and the Whole Russia Aleksiy II said Wednesday [1 May] upon arrival in Yerevan's Zvartnots airport.

Since Vth century, after the Chalcedon Assembly, the historic split of churches has been a painful wound, Aleksiy II said. Russia's top clergyman highly appreciated a 30-year theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and Pre-Chalcedonian, Eastern Church.

Aleksiy II noted that meetings between the Heads of the Russian and Armenian Churches might serve as a basis for such a dialogue. According to him, these meeting will also promote consolidation of traditional fraternal ties and cooperation between the two peoples.

Welcoming his counterpart, Catholicos of All Armenians Garegin I said: "The development of fraternal relations is a top necessity, especially at this very time, when our countries — Russia and Armenia — and our two churches — the Russian Orthodox Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church — confront with new situations, requiring concerted actions."

The current return visit by Aleksiy II comes after the visit of Catholicos Garegin I to Russia last year. Russian Patriarch is being accompanied by metropolitans of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Maykop and Armavir, as well as other top clergymen. High guests were welcomed in St. Echmiadzin in compliance with traditions accepted in Eastern Christian Churches. After that Aleksiy II served a mourning liturgy at the grave of late Catholicos of All Armenians Vazgen I.

Armenia: President Leaves for PRC on Official Visit

NC0205200696 Yerevan Radio Yerevan International Service in Armenian 1900 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An Armenian delegation headed by President Levon Ter-Petrosyan left for an official visit to PRC this afternoon.

Levon Ter-Petrosyan will meet (Qiao Shi), chairman of the Chinese Assembly of People's Representatives, PRC President Jiang Zemin, and other high-ranking officials in Beijing.

A joint communique on the principles of friendly relations between Armenia and the PRC is expected to be signed at the conclusion of the official visit.

Agreements on avoidance of double taxation and cooperation in air transportation will also be signed between Armenia and China.

The signing of a cooperation agreement between the Armenian Central Bank and the PRC State Bank is also envisaged.

A program for cooperation between the Armenian Culture, Youth, and Sports Ministry and the PRC Culture Ministry will also be submitted for signing.

An agreement on cooperation in the sphere of education, science, and technology will also be signed between the Armenian Culture and Science Ministry and PRC State Committee for Education and Science.

Armenia: Karabakh Statement Denies Firing at Azerbaijani Airliner

NC0205172396 Yerevan NOYAN TAPAN in English 1430 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Stepanakert, May 2 (NOYAN TAPAN) — Karabakh Foreign Ministry issued Thursday [2 May] an official statement, which reads in particular:

"Defense Ministry of Azerbaijan issued a statement, containing falsified facts regarding the April 24 incident with the Azeri YAK-40 passenger plane, that was flying from Baku to Naftalan.

"To this effect, the Karabakh Foreign Ministry considers it necessary to report the following: On April 24, 1996, at 13:11 pm Azeri YAK-40 plane, having veered off its course, flied over the front line. The plane was spotted by anti-aircraft system of Karabakh, however, as the plane was recognized as being civil, no measures to shoot it down had been taken. The Karabakh Defense Ministry possesses no information about the plane

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having been shot from light armaments, and admits that the low flying plane could have caused a spontaneous reaction on the part of the military on both sides.

"That incident is the third violation of Karabakh's airspace by Azeri planes over the past month. Karabakh Foreign Ministry believes that Azerbaijan is deliberately using civil planes for carrying intelligence missions in the region. The Karabakh Foreign Ministry calls upon the Azeri leadership to refrain from actions, which may break the two-year cease fire in the conflict zone."

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan: Russian Envoy for Nagorno-Karabakh Ends Talks in Baku

LD0105165596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1616 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BAKU, May 1 (Interfax) — The Russian president's envoy for Nagorno-Karabakh settlement, Vladimir Kazimirov, held a number of confidential meetings with Azerbaijani leaders during his two-day visit to Baku which ended Wednesday, a senior Azerbaijani diplomat told Interfax.

The Azerbaijani leadership reiterated its readiness to define a status of Nagorno-Karabakh provided Azerbaijan's territorial integrity is observed, he said.

To positively solve the issue, all occupied Azerbaijani lands must be freed, Kazimirov was told.

Armenia and Azerbaijan has not yet agreed on a new round of talks, the diplomat said. At the same time, he did not exclude that the OSCE Minsk Group for Nagorno-Karabakh could decide on this issue at its next meeting in one of the European capitals in early May.

According to the diplomat's information, the mediators decided to hold talks only if there is firm confidence that they will reach feasible progress.

The last three round of the OSCE-sponsored talks proved fruitless.

Azerbaijan: Karabakh Believes Baku Uses Civilian Planes for Spying

LD0205162596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1241 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] STEPANAKERT, May 2 (Interfax) — In its statement released on Thursday the Foreign Ministry of the self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh said it believes that Azerbaijan uses civilian planes for the purpose of reconnaissance.

Earlier Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry accused Armenian troops of having fired at a passenger plane en route between the town of Naftalan located not far from Nagorno-Karabakh and Baku. According to the Defense Ministry, the damaged plane had to have a forced landing. None of its 20 passengers was hurt.

For its part Karabakh's Foreign Ministry said in its statement that on April 24 at 1:11 p.m. an Azeri plane of the Yak-40 type flew over the line of engagement between Karabakh and Azeri troops, having deviated from its usual course.

The plane was spotted by Karabakh's air-defense installations, but, in view of its type, nothing was done to halt its flight, the Foreign Ministry pointed out.

Karabakh's Defense Ministry has no information as to the fire opened at the Yak-40 plane, though it concedes that a low flying plane could provoke "spontaneous reaction from servicemen" stationed on both sides of the front line.

In the past month Azeri planes violated Nagorno-Karabakh's air space on three occasions, which "makes it possible to presume" that Azerbaijan uses civilian planes for reconnaissance purposes.

The Foreign Ministry urged the Azeri authorities to refrain from actions "capable of breaking the two-year-old truce."

Azerbaijan: New Oil Consortium To Be Created

NC0105203996 Baku TURAN in English 1429 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku/01.05.96/TURAN — Next month SOCAR [State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic] and French ELF oil company are expected to sign basic principles of agreement on exploration and development of perspective deposit "Lenkoran-Deniz" in the southern part of Azeri section of the Caspian. In the future other foreign companies are also expected to join this project.

"Lenkoran-Deniz" is located in Baku's archipelago of the Caspian. The specialists estimate that volume of recovered resources will be approximately 40 million ton oil.

The deposit is on the depth from 50 to 120 metres.

Georgia

Georgia: Shevardnadze Threatens To Use Military Force in Abkhazia

LD0205132896 Tbilisi IBERIA in Georgian 1130 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 2 May — Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze has declared that if

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peaceful negotiations with Abkhazia end without results, then the state will have to resort to extreme measures, that is, use military force.

Georgia: South Ossetian Officials on Prospects for Settling Conflict

AU0205120196 Tbilisi REZONANSI in Georgian 23-24 Apr 96 p 2

[Interview with Kosta Dzugayev, chairman of the South Ossetian Parliament Legislative Commission, and Dimitriy Medoyev, head of the South Ossetian Department of Foreign Affairs, by Shalva Gabunia in Tskhinvali; date not given: "The Ossetian Side Is Threatening To Exacerbate the Conflict if Events Do Not Proceed According to Their Wish"]

[FBIS Translated Text] REZONANSI has already supplied information about the signing of the protocol on the initialing of the memorandum "on measures to ensure the security of the sides participating in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict and strengthen relations between them" at the meeting of the five sides held in Tskhinvali on 17 April. The Georgian side is keeping the essence of the document a secret and refraining from commenting on it.

REZONANSI got in touch with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the official representative of the department for relations with the CIS who directly participated in the meeting in Tskhinvali. As he pointed out, the signing of the memorandum will take place in two weeks. The venue has not yet been finalized. According to him, this document does not require any preliminary coordination with Parliament, although specific questions have been written into it and, overall, it does not have a declarative character. According to information supplied by the official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the initial version of the memorandum contained questions connected with the border and the regime for crossing it, but these were removed from the final document. According to the same source, the memorandum is an important step toward settling the conflict.

Just before the meeting of the five sides in Tskhinvali on 17 April, REZONANSI arranged an exclusive interview with Kosta Dzugayev, chairman of the self-proclaimed parliament legislative commission in the Tskhinvali region, and Dimitriy Medoyev, head of the self-proclaimed department of foreign affairs. Their attitude to the memorandum nullifies the optimism of the Georgian side.

[Gabunia] How would you assess current relations between the Georgian and Ossetian sides?

[Dzugayev] In spite of the relative improvement in relations, the Georgian side is taking unfriendly steps, which is not contributing to a settlement of the conflict. For example, through the efforts of the Georgian side, the Ossetian side was removed from the list of participants in the international press conference in the Hague, although we had been invited there from the start (a meeting of the heads of unrecognized states was held in the Hague last month — editor's note). In addition, the Georgian side is trying to violate the military parity in the villages in Leningori (now Gori — editor's note) rayon.

There are two trends in Georgia: One is the search for mutually acceptable compromises, taking into account the current reality; the other is the attempt to resolve the "Samachablo" [South Ossetia] problem by means of directives. I think the second trend prevails at the moment.

[Gabunia] What is the trend in Tskhinvali?

[Dzugayev] I will state our position by quoting our chairman, Ludvig Chibirov: Our republic is a historical acquisition that can be taken away only along with our lives.

[Gabunia] What can you say about the Georgian-Ossetian memorandum?

[Dzugayev] We reached agreement with the Supreme Council on the draft memorandum. There were certain differences of opinion, but it was decided in the end that the South Ossetian side would sign it.

[Gabunia] On what issues did opinions differ?

[Dzugayev] There were debates about the border issue and the procedure for crossing it and also an amnesty for those people who did not participate in combat operations.

[Gabunia] How realistic are the prospects for a political settlement of the conflict?

[Dzugayev] We should take into account that not a single family remains in Tskhinvali who has not suffered as a result of the conflict. Nine hundred people were killed and 4,000 wounded. This creates the potential for renewal of the conflict. We are trying to direct this negative force along the necessary channel but, if events develop in an undesirable direction, we will take this potential into account.

If forces that are trying to settle the conflict through directives prevail in Georgia, we can undoubtedly expect a new ordeal. One thing is clear: That form of coexistence that we had before could not prevent

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a conflict and, as such, it is unacceptable. We need to search for a new form of relations.

[Gabunia] How do you view the prospects for settling the conflict?

[Medoyev] Everything will be fine if the approach corresponds to international norms, that is to say, if it is based on the right to self-determination and equality.

[Gabunia] How do you understand "equality?"

[Medoyev] All peoples are equal. This axiom is the same as all people being equal before God.

[Gabunia] How can you connect God with politics?

[Medoyev] Politics is man's invention, whereas God.... In short, future relations between Georgia and South Ossetia will be those between equal subjects.

[Gabunia] How would you assess the memorandum?

[Medoyev] There can be very many memorandums and hundreds of documents can be signed, but this will not bring peace. The main thing is mutual understanding and agreement.

Georgia: National Security Council Discusses Military Issues, CIS

LD0205131996 Tbilisi IPRINDA in Russian 1120 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 2 May (IPRINDA) — A session of the [Georgian] National Security Council, chaired by Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze, was held yesterday. The session discussed draft bills on Georgia's military doctrine, the program for developing the army, defense, compulsory military service, and discipline in military units of the armed forces.

The session discussed ways of improving the coordination of efforts made by foreign countries and international organizations to find a political settlement to the conflicts in Georgia as well as the state program of cooperation with CIS states in fighting international terrorism.

There was a debate on setting up a provisional commission to work out a national security concept. The main aim of the commission will be to define a political and economic course and a state policy on national security and to define national security strategy and policy.

The session heard information about the work which has been done to restore relations with the Tskhinvali region.

The session was held behind closed doors.

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Estonia

Estonia: Better Relations With Russia 'Cornerstone' of Foreign Policy

LD0205191296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1633 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TALLINN, May 2 (Interfax) — The improvement of relations with Russia is a cornerstone of the Estonian foreign policy, Prime Minister Tiit Vahi told the press in Tallinn Thursday after meeting Hungarian President Arpad Goncz.

Vahi called national security a priority "especially in the light of the threats made by a number of Russian politicians lately."

At the same time he pointed to some positive changes in Estonian-Russian relations. In his opinion Moscow's recent proposal to agree with Tallinn on a most favored nation status in trade indicates that Russia is also interested in normalizing relations with Estonia.

Vahi and Goncz who came for a three day official visit Thursday declared their countries have common foreign policy objectives: membership in the EU and NATO.

Both leaders spoke for greater cooperation to reach these objectives.

The Hungarian president stressed that while willing to join NATO Budapest does not overlook Russia's concern for its security.

Vahi and Goncz reportedly agreed to work out bilateral agreements on the mutual protection of investments and free trade this year.

Estonia: Premier To Meet Russian Counterpart at Baltic Summit

WS0305084396 Tallinn ETA in English 1923 GMT 2 May 96

["News Release"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, May 2 (ETA) — Estonian Premier Tiit Vahi is to meet his Russian counterpart Viktor Chernomyrdin at the May 3-4 summit of the 11-nation Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), taking place in the mediaeval town of Visby on the Swedish island of Gotland.

The summit is organised by Sweden because its Presidency of CBSS is drawing to a close.

The initiative for the meeting of Vahi and Chernomyrdin came from Russia, Premier's press service told ETA.

"Tiit Vahi gladly accepted the proposal to meet his Russian counterpart because it promises to warm up the icy relations Estonia and Russia have at present," PM's spokesman said.

Estonia has the worst relations with Russia among the three Baltic countries, having troubles with the large Russian-speaking minority in addition to the lagging border issue and double taxation of Estonian goods on the Russian border despite the free trade agreement.

Vahi told ETA that Estonia would follow pragmatic mutual interests instead of the current political situation and emotions in trying to solve the issues.

Vahi did not rule out the possibility of a positive breakthrough in Estonian-Russian relations after the meeting.

The meeting in Visby will be the second meeting of Estonian and Russian heads of state. The first one took place in Moscow in 1992 between Premier Tiit Vahi and Russian Premier Yegor Gaydar.

Premier Vahi also meets Russian Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland in Visby.

Although generally attended only by Baltic Sea countries, this time President of the European Commission Jacques Santer and Italian Prime Minister Lamberto Dini, as representative of the EU President country, have been invited.

Santer travels to the meeting to put forward ideas on how to boost cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, in rapid change following the end of the Cold War.

To reinforce the role of the regional forum, the Commission also proposes the creation of a permanent secretariat for the CBSS as well as the strengthening of its economic working group.

Estonia: Report on Hungarian President's Talks in Tallinn

LD0205133896 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1200 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Hungarian president continues his visit to Estonia. Mall Malberg reports:

[Malberg] Hungarian President Arpad Goncz and Estonian Prime Minister Tiit Vahi have just finished their talks in Toompea. They discussed relations between the two states, matters concerning Europe and NATO, and many other issues.

Before this, Goncz was in Kadriorg [presidential palace] where he met with President Lennart Meri.

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I asked Raul Malk, a deputy chancellor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, about the content of the talks between the presidents:

[Begin Malk recording] The presidents discussed bilateral relations and current international issues, first of all the integration processes of both states toward NATO and the European Union. I think that a very important message from the Hungarian side was that, in response to our fall 1995 proposal, Hungary is prepared to hold talks during the second half of 1996 and to conclude a free trade agreement. [passage omitted] [end recording]

The Hungarian president's visit to Estonia has lasted half a day. Here are the first impressions of Toivo Tasa, Estonian ambassador to Hungary:

[Begin Tasa recording] This visit is the first ever by a Hungarian president to Estonia and this alone gives it historic importance. Currently, it is very important in Estonian-Hungarian relations to create a contractual basis for future economic cooperation but just as important is a political exchange of views. We have both been successful at reforms, we are both in the waiting room of NATO and the European Union. This is the context of this visit and I hope that this visit will be a success, as the first half day indicates. [end recording]

Estonia: Vahi, Hungarian President Discuss NATO, EU, Cooperation

LD0205174796 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1500 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hungarian President Arpad Goncz called for closer relations between Estonia and Hungary at a meeting with Prime Minister Tiit Vahi today.

The Hungarian president suggested closer cooperation between the parliaments and between the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Defense. Goncz added that Estonia could take part in the work of the NATO international language school, which trains officers to NATO standards.

Vahi and Goncz noted that the two related nations had been successful at conducting essentially similar economic reforms. Estonia and Hungary also share several foreign policy goals; for example, membership in NATO and the European Union. Goncz and Vahi agreed that when working toward these goals, the countries should cooperate more closely and exchange experience.

Goncz noted that Hungary deemed the joining of NATO as extremely important but also paid attention to Russia's views so that the possible expansion of the organization would not spoil Hungary's relations with other states.

By the end of the meeting, Goncz and Vahi agreed that Estonia and Hungary were ready for cooperation in all spheres and that this was enhanced in every way by the president's visit.

Estonia: Tallinn Not To Allow Latvian Fishing Ships Into Its Waters

WS0305114996 Tallinn BNS in English 1017 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, May 3, BNS — Estonia is not going to allow Latvian fishing ships to enter its waters until the signing of a fishing agreement, Taidus Linikoja, deputy director of the Estonian Board of Fisheries, told BNS Thursday.

"Latvian ships may not start catching fish in Estonia's territorial waters and economic zone until the fishing conditions are put in place, and trawling for fish is altogether forbidden until May 31," Linikoja said. He heads the Estonian delegation at talks with Latvia.

The Foreign Ministry sent a temporary fishing agreement to the Latvian Embassy in Tallinn Apr. 23, but Latvia has as yet not made known its views on it.

Linikoja said the pact stipulated that Latvian ships abide by Estonian fishing regulations in both the territorial waters and the economic zone. He added that Latvian fishermen might not like the ban on trawling in the Gulf of Riga until the end of this month. Latvian laws allow trawling as of mid-May.

The coordinates of the area covered by the agreement are set in the south by the boundaries of Estonian territorial waters and economic zone in the Gulf of Riga under the country's law on maritime borders and in the north, by the line set by Latvia in April.

Latvian ships are supposed to inform the Estonian border guard in advance of their entry into Estonian waters.

According to an agreement Estonian Prime Minister Tiit Vahi and his Latvian counterpart, Andris Skele, reached in Vilnius Apr. 14, the two countries are to conclude by Aug. 1 long-term treaties on fishing and maritime borders.

Linikoja said if the Latvian side did not accept the temporary accord a new meeting between foreign ministry representatives or prime ministers would be necessary.

Estonia has presented to Latvia three draft agreements on fishing, one of which even reached the stage of initialization in 1992, but the signing of a treaty has

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gotten stuck among other things because of Latvians' dissatisfaction with the Estonian borderline, Linikoja said.

Estonia: May Day Rallies Held in Narva, Sillamae

WS0205082896 Tallinn ETA in English 0744 GMT 2 May 96

[From 2 May EESTI PAEVALEHT, p.3; "News Bulletin" No. 85]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] May Day rallies with about 700 participants were held yesterday in the North-East Estonian cities Narva and Sillamae.

The bigger, 500-participant demonstration took place in Narva, people holding the red flags of the former Soviet Union and flags of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic. The participants demanded the government to find solutions to the economic problems. Some speakers called on Russian population to unite in order to stand up against discrimination of Russians and the despotic behaviour of officials.

A 150-participant meeting was held in Sillamae, slogans demanding easing the citizenship law, restoration of the Soviet Union and calling all proletarians in the world to unite. Demonstrators in Sillamae signed a resolution and a petition to the Estonian government and to the government of Russia and to the State Duma committee for protection of Russians abroad.

Lithuania

Lithuania: Vilnius Protests Russian Anti-Baltic Statements

LD0105134296 Vilnius Radio Vilnius in English 2130 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On Tuesday, Lithuania handed in a note to Russia, calling its attention to the fact that several Russian politicians have recently made unfriendly statements with regard to Lithuania.

A week ago, a television reporter and a member of the Russian State Duma, Aleksandr Nevzorov, declared that Russia was going to get back control of the Baltic states again, even if a big loss of lives is needed.

Two days later, another member of the State Duma, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, spoke about his intentions to block out the Baltic countries as independent states as soon as he becomes the president of Russia.

The note of the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry runs that such statements can have only a negative effect on the Lithuanian and Russian relationship and on constructive dialogue between the two states. The Baltic News Service quotes a high-ranking Lithuanian Foreign Ministry official as saying that similar declarations by Russian politicians run counter to the spirit of the Lithuanian and Russian political treaty.

Lithuania: Agricultural Trade Agreement Initialled With Norway

WS0305084096 Tallinn BNS in English 1640 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Vilnius, May 2, BNS — Lithuanian and Norwegian officials have coordinated and initialled a trade agreement on agricultural produce.

The agreement was negotiated in Oslo on Monday and Tuesday and coordinated in accordance with a pact between Lithuania and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

The Lithuanian-Norwegian trade agreement on agricultural produce is expected to be signed in mid-May, the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry's information office said.

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